

FANTASYNOPSIS

THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASTIC FILMS & VISCERAL VIDEOS

number three

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inside this issue

**DON'T LOOK NOW, MANHUNTER,
TWIN PEAKS, ROBERT BLOCH, ED
NAHA, JAMES GLICKENHAUS, SHOCK
AROUND THE CLOCK 4, OVER 50
REVIEWS, FICTION AND MUCH, MUCH
MORE...**

FANTASY

number three

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Contributions are welcomed but please contact the editor beforehand to discuss ideas.

This issue is dedicated to Wendyne Ackerman and Jim Henson.

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Back Cover - HARDWARE

..... PLUG TIME

THE KILLING EDGE



Coming soon to a screen near you as they say will be a new film by Philip Cook and John Ellis, who previously gave us the low-budget **STAR QUEST - BEYOND THE RISING MOON**, it's called **THE KILLING EDGE** and concerns "... UFO's and the Air Force, and involves the Stealth fighter program... It's an alien invasion like you've never seen before".

One of its cast members is "Cinemacabre" editor, George Stover (pictured on the left). Keep watching the skies!

Editorial

Welcome fellow cinephiles to the third issue of my pulp baby, FANTASYNOPSIS, yes, I know it's been a long wait, but I hope that you feel that the contents make up for it? 56 pages of reviews and information on A4 size pages - this was intended to be an all-psyche phenomena issue but as the articles came together, especially the interviews, I had to leave the link at just two films, **DON'T LOOK NOW** and **MANHUNTER** (with a little link in the **TWIN PEAKS** feature). Enjoy the zine but first please indulge my following comments:

CIC Video were recently proud to announce that they were re-issuing a restored version of **VIDEODROME**, but they failed to point out that it was still cut by 1 minute and 2 seconds, which included 2 cuts that were shown in the original butchered release!! Meanwhile, Legend Video have a tape out called **THE BEST OF MARTIAL ARTS**, a documentary showing the best sequences from a wide selection of M.A. films. It's narrated by John Saxon and is, up until a point, a damn fine tape but at the aforementioned point something silly happens; Saxon saves the "best until last" and gives a big build up to the infamous weapons segment from **ENTER THE DRAGON** and pays particular attention to Bruce Lee's use of the nunchaku - the clip starts, then suddenly stops just as he makes a grab for the deadly weapon!! My last ranting concerns "The Daily Mail" and Richard Neighbour and their his desperate attempt at page filling and at the same time trying to re-introduce the "video nasties" debate with the pathetic headline on page 6 of the 14/9/90 issue, "Return Of The Video Nasties", I quote: "Compared with many films legally available today, **DRILLER KILLER** seems almost mild", "... like regular viewers of pornography, horror film fans seem to need more violence each time they view", "An example of the video nasty in its present legal form is the **NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET** series", and so it goes on. The only sensible things said are where Mr. Neighbour says "Much of the problem lies in the lack of control over renting video films to those obviously below the age demanded" and "Surely it is not beyond the wit of video makers to devise a system that would immobilise the machine until the parent was present to see what the children were slotting into it?", but these obvious statements at curing kids watching '18' rated tapes do not in any way justify their his amazing comments at linking the events of children being involved in satanic rituals in Lancashire with that of watching horror films!!? What the hell is wrong with people like Mr. Neighbour, how would he like it if I was to remove half of his page before putting the 'newspaper' on sale? I can only hope that the intelligent readers of this publication have enough sense to simply dismiss it for what it is - garbage? With 1992 fast approaching and European standards forming let's just hope that the BBFC, who have recently displayed that they are maybe paving the way for things to come with their passing of films like **BAD TASTE** and **SOCIETY** completely uncensored, can adopt more of the intelligence of their European counterparts?

Long Live The New Fresh!

Paul.

Paul J. Brown - October 1990



**I BASCRAFT WAY,
GODMANCHESTER,
HUNTINGDON, CAMBS,
PE18 8EG, ENGLAND.**

Dear Paul

Thanks for your letter and the copy of FANTASYNOPSIS number two.

I've been reading it over the past few days, mostly at lunch-times, and thought I'd write and let you have the benefit (?) of my opinion. To start off, I enjoyed it. It's definitely a classy publication - I think its polish justifies the £1.70 cover price, in terms of numbers of pages, quality of illustrations and general, all-round presentation.

The idea of a 'zombie' issue was interesting, though I might quibble over a few of the films included under the heading - for example I don't class *THE EVIL DEAD* as one, since the characters who become possessed don't necessarily have to die first, though of course this is no barrier either! Good to see *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES* getting some of the attention it deserves - too often it is forgotten about in comparison with *WORLD*, which I think (as you may have realised!) is over-rated.

Having been at 'Shock!' too (or should that be 'Shock!' three?), I agree with most of your remarks, though I liked *NIGHT LIFE* better than *HARDCORE* and didn't like *THE FLY II* - I don't think people were booing it, I think it was aimed more at the censor!

The reviews were also generally fair (= I agreed with most of them), though I'm not sure why *THE TERMINATOR* was included, since it's neither a new release nor an obscure indie awaiting discovery.

On the 'Scala' question, I must admit I can't really see the point of reprinting old programmes - it was interesting to read the sort of thing they showed before I started going along, but for someone who doesn't go there, I'd have thought it would have been a bit tedious.

I actually quite enjoyed the Robert England interview - I think my gut reaction to articles on him is to turn the pages, so that most of the information in your article was new to me when I made the effort to read it.

Contrary to one reader's letter, I enjoy reading lists of other people's favourite films, even if it's for no better reason than to say 'My god, he (or she) likes THAT?'

Overall, I liked it and I'm looking forward to the next one.

Kindest regards and best wishes.
JIM McLENNAN, EAST DULWICH, LONDON.

Dear Mr Brown

FANTASYNOPSIS seems to be off to a wonderful start. One thing I appreciate is your willingness to include articles spanning all aspects and areas of the genre... not just current gore

and/or blockbusters.

Because you are a British publication, I am equally happy to note that you obviously have a heartfelt respect for the wonderful Hammer productions. The article in issue #2 on *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES* says it all. Likewise the short piece on Peter Cushing. America may have its horror film roots saturated by Universal Studios but the same may be said of England and Hammer. Thank you Paul for keeping that history fresh in many young readers' minds.

Of course I never tire of another Forry Ackerman contribution. His article, 'My 13 Favourite Imagi-Movies - And Why?' was a real joy and experience to read. Of course his opinions are his own, which makes this type of article that much more fun to enjoy and appreciate.

The Robert England interview was the best I've run across. Congratulations on a job well done.

All in all you have done a really fine job with FANTASYNOPSIS. I can only see it getting better and better as time goes by. If I can find anything negative to say about your magazine, I guess I would have to wonder why you would wish to waste valuable space listing dated movie play dates via the 'Scala Club Cinema - Wants You!' feature? Certainly the time, trouble and expense could be utilised elsewhere. Furthermore, if you wish your magazine to go international, a feature like this is unquestionably a waste of valuable space.

In closing may I wish you every success in the world Paul.

My very best wishes.
GARY DORST, WISCONSIN, USA.

Dear Paul

I just had to write, your issue two is... amazing.

First the good points: I liked the letters page, very interesting! 'Shock Around The Clock 3'; A nice review, not too heavy and funny (sometimes); Have You Zine 197. Er, not sure, ok it's a long list but do you have to include *FANGORIA*, *STARLOG* and *FEAR!*? After *PILKINGTON*. My god! I saw this ages ago (both times), it was brilliant, nice to see a review of a TV classic! *Fab The What the Press Said* was a good thing too! Freddy 'Interview'. I thought this was quite good, very good even! Very long and very interesting! Scala. Very interesting! The artwork was very good too! Nice to see a mix of photo and illustration! The bad points: What a shame, I can't think of any, only the bit about *FANGORIA* in Have You Zine 197!

One extra point, I like your layout very much! Very SANJIAN in some respects.

Could you please let me have the address of the Scala Cinema? Thankyou.

Goodbye for now.
ANDREW BARRASS, CROFTON, WAKEFIELD.

Thanks for your comments Andrew, *FANGORIA* may have its bad points but it still offers some of the best stills around! Quite a few people have

asked for the Scala address, so here it is: SCALA CINEMA, 275-277 PENTONVILLE ROAD, LONDON N1. Tel: 01-278-0051/8052. Ed.

Dear Paul

Just a note to say thanks for your summing up of *SHOCK AROUND THE CLOCK* 1989 in FANTASYNOPSIS 2. So glad you enjoyed it and I was pleased to read the chronology of events as you saw them. The whole 24 hours passes by in such a frantic blur that I have to rely on reviews like yours to remind me of what I actually did!

Why did we leave *THE VINEYARD* until last? Because it was bloody awful that's why! Both Stefan (Jaworski) and I knew the audience would either leave or fall asleep. But nine good movies out of ten isn't such a bad deal is it? We hadn't been as lucky as that with past *SHOCKS*. Actually I wanted to show *SUNDOWN: THE VAMPIRE IN RETREAT*. The concept of playing it at sun up appealed to me but Stefan didn't like the movie at all. As he had to put up with months of screaming insistence on my part about playing *THE CHURCH* in Italian, I bowed to his decision over the final wind down. Showing *THE CHURCH* was an experiment I'm more than happy with in retrospect. It gave everyone the first chance in years to see an Argento production on the big screen. And while some didn't like it, they appreciated the reasons why we took the risk. Michele Soavi was thrilled by the reception it got and amazed anyone even knew who he was. Italian directors like Soavi often work in a vacuum and it was great you and others took the trouble to talk to him.

The T-shirt wasn't that naff was it? I liked the design. Oh well! The heat in the Scala was the main problem though this year wasn't it Stefan and I are considering moving the festival to a later date in 1990 as a result. But will we ever have such a great Summer again? We'll keep you posted. We're already planning *SHOCK AROUND THE CLOCK 4* because we want to top the last line-up. So far it's looking good with one major personality surprise up our sleeves. Start guessing now!

Once again, Paul, I enjoyed reading your comments. And doubtless we'll meet in the Scala foyer again next year.

Best regards.
ALAN JONES, LONDON.

Many thanks for your letter Alan, check out the *SHOCK 4* article this issue!
Ed.

Dear Mr Brown

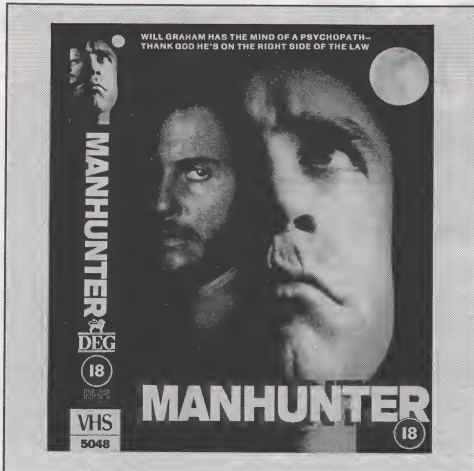
I recently received issues 1 & 2 of FANTASYNOPSIS and I am not in the publishing business I only collect magazines and fanzines, but let me say that you have a wonderfully professional product. Both issues are great. I love the 'Have You Zine 197' section from both issues.

From No.1 I loved the reviews on *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE* and *TAXI DRIVER* (the letter being my favourite film of the 1970s along with *BONNIE AND CLYDE* for the 1960s, with *BLUE VELVET* for the 1980s).

No.2 has a little of everything - a well done publication. I wish you continued luck and success in many, many future issues. Let me know when issue 3 is out?

Take care.
FRANK LIQUORI, NEW JERSEY, USA.

**The page that let's you
spill your guts!!**



SYNOPSIS

Defective Will Graham has a terrible gift: the ability to think like the psychotic killers he is stalking. This talent brings him success in his work but at great personal cost with his last case leading to premature retirement when he almost lost his life in pursuit of mass murderer Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

He now lives at a coastal retreat with his wife and young son, but when he receives a visit from his old boss, Jack Crawford, who tells him that another serial killer is at work and that he needs Will's help to find him before he kills again, he knows he won't be able to refuse.

The killer is on a "lunar cycle" and with just over three weeks to the next full moon Graham gets straight to work. His first stop is at the home of the killer's second and latest victim, the Leeds family. After this he studies a video of home movies made by the family and slowly he starts to understand the killer. Certain the killer couldn't resist touching the bodies, Graham asks forensics to dust for prints on the eyes and finger and toe nails of the victims.

The next morning Graham joins a police briefing on the latest news of the investigation, learning that those working on the case have nicknamed the killer 'The Tooth Fairy', and it's here that he also learns that his hunch was right and prints have been found on the eye of one victim and the toe nail of another.

Leaving the briefing, Graham has a short, angry encounter with sleazy 'Tattler' journalist, Freddie Lounds, the man whose dedication to reporting the Lecter case lead to him sneaking into Graham's hospital room to photograph his injuries, before going to visit Lecter at Chesapeake State Hospital for the Criminally Insane where he is being held, trading information on the case in order to "recover the mind scent". As Graham leaves the hospital, Lounds, who has followed him there, takes a picture of him. Meanwhile, back inside, Lecter calls for a phone to call his lawyer but then

cunningly re-routes the call to enable him to obtain Graham's home address.

Graham now flies to Birmingham, Alabama, to visit the home of the Jacobis, the killer's first victims. Climbing a tree that overlooks the Jacobis' house he finds a strange symbol carved into the bark. Graham calls Crawford to tell him what he has found and Crawford then tells him that his picture, accompanied by a sensational article, has appeared in the latest 'Tattler'.

While Graham is at the film Crawford receives a call from Dr. Chilton, chief of staff of the hospital holding Lecter, informing him that a note has been found in Lecter's cell which they believe is from 'The Tooth Fairy', and Graham flies back to join Crawford at the lab where the note will be tested.

In the lab a hair is found on the note (which Will later confirm that the note is from the killer) along with several finger prints, but in order to get the note back into Lecter's cell before he realises they have it they are unable to properly identify them. The note is in two parts where Lecter has scored it with a felt-tip pen to remove the part where the killer tells him how they can communicate, but by examining the torn ends under infra-red light rendering Lecter's pen invisible and enabling them to identify what appears to be the tops of two T's and an R, Graham is convinced that Lecter is to contact the killer via the personal ads in 'The Tattler'.

Checking the ads in the next issue they soon find what they are looking for, but unable to break the code in time to replace it with an ad of their own to trap the killer they decide to let it run so Lecter and 'The Tooth Fairy' won't suspect they know and might use the same method of communication again.

Still unable to break the code and knowing that 'The Tooth Fairy' reads 'The Tattler', Graham decides to offer himself as bait by having 'The Tattler' print a story giving false information on the killer designed to goad him into trying to get at Graham, and to help him there is also a picture of Graham and, at his own insistence,

Lounds, stood in front of a window with the background enough in focus for the killer to work out where it was taken.

The trap set, Graham, backed by a heavy police presence, waits in the area at night for the killer to strike, but the only person they encounter is an unsuspecting jogger.

Meanwhile, in the car park under 'The Tattler' offices, Lounds is seized by 'The Tooth Fairy' and taken to his house. Here the terrified Lounds, rightly fearing for his life, is forced to look at slides of the killer's victims before and after he has visited them and then made to recite a message retracting his 'Tattler' story into a tape recorder before 'The Tooth Fairy' bites off his lips and returns his burning body, strapped in a wheelchair, to the car park from which he was taken.

The code has finally been broken and Will learns that Lecter's message told 'The Tooth Fairy' to kill Graham's family and provided him with their address. At their house Graham's wife and son are awoken by strange noises outside but it is only the local police alerted by Crawford to protect them. The family are moved to a safe house where Will joins them to help them settle in before returning to the case which is now starting to consume him.

Frances Dolarhyde, the true identity of 'The Tooth Fairy', is at work at the film processing lab where he is employed and meeting blind co-worker Reba McLane for the first time he offers to give her a lift home. On the way he takes her to a local zoo where she is able to touch an anaesthetised tiger awaiting an operation.

Graham continues to work on the case, trying to get inside the mind of the killer.

Dolarhyde's relationship with Reba develops and he takes her to his home where, aroused, he watches films of his next victims as Reba sits beside him. They go to bed together.

Graham is now fully submerged in the case and keeps examining and re-examining every detail looking for one vital clue.

That night Dolarhyde goes to visit Reba, but as he arrives he is enraged to see another man already there, and when she goes inside and the man leaves, Dolarhyde kills him and forces his way into Reba's home.

With a new moon imminent, Crawford is resigned to having to move fast to recover clues from the scene of the next murders, but Will refuses to give up and keeps going through the video of the Leeds' and Jacobis' home movies until he is certain he has found the vital link between the victims and sets the wheels in motion to confirm his suspicions.

Having established that the killer must work at a Missouri film processing lab Graham and Crawford fly there as the local police are fed the necessary information to identify him.

At Dolarhyde's house the petrified Reba McLane is at the mercy of the killer who is now seemingly out of control.

The plane arrives and supplied with Dolarhyde's address by the Missouri police, Graham leads Crawford and the other police to his house for the final confrontation with the crazed killer...

REVIEW

ENTER THE RED DRAGON

I've seen the future of thrillers and its name is **MANHUNTER**.

As written and directed by Michael Mann, **MANHUNTER**, is highly original and immensely stylish, and by foregoing, for the most part, the usual round of blazing guns and squealing tyres to concentrate on the details of forensic science and old fashioned things like characterisation without sacrificing any of the tension and excitement expected from such films, Mann breathes new life into a seemingly tired genre and points the way to the future of police thrillers.

None of which justifies the elongation of the title, as some sources do, to Michael Mann's **MURKINER** because the story adheres so closely to the source novel - 'Red Dragon', written in 1981 by Thomas Harris - that if it needs any such title then it could equally well be **Thomas Harris' MURKINER**.

MURKINER also differs from the thriller norm in that we learn the identity of the killer quite early on, allowing us to learn something about him and his motives rather than his being just another faceless psycho to be gunned down in the last reel.

The central character, Detective Will Graham, also represents an interesting departure from the genre staples; neither a laconic **DIRTY HARRY**-type cop, nor part of a mis-matched duo who come to respect each other, Graham works alone and is the only person he has to learn to like himself. No easy task considering his unique gift/curse of being able to empathize with his quarry, for although this ability to get inside the mind of the killer wins him the respect of his colleagues it's hardly conducive to winning their friendship and Graham has to work with the knowledge that he has more in common with his prey than his fellow cops. As his most famous arrest, Dr Hannibal Lecter, taunts him when he visits him in prison to get the scent back, "The reason you caught me, Will, is because we're just alike. You want the scent? Smell yourself!"

The overriding aspect of this hi-tech, thoroughly modern thriller is the intimate knowledge of the techniques of forensic science, all intricately detailed in the book and obviously the result of painstaking research, and all filled by Mann to be as gripping as any high speed car chase - the scene where 'The Tooth Fairy's' letter to Lecter is being examined under infra-red light to show up the differences in the two pens used and so reveal more of the letter had this viewer on the edge of his seat like no film since **NAD MAX 2**.

This hi-tech feel is enhanced by the characters' familiarity with and easy use of modern machines from cameras and tape-recorders to fax machines and computers, but, like the forensic testing procedures, it's never just for show and always advances the story another stage forward.

Likewise all the information of the causes, order and timing of wounds inflicted on the Leeds family makes them felt far more deeply than a conventional presentation of their deaths would (we do get a brief taste of this with the killer's entry into their home marking our entry into the film), and this provides the film's first great scene as Graham stands in the eerily quiet room where the murders occurred, blood splattered around the plush, expensively furnished, white-walled, white-carpeted room in a frenzy of killing, as he recites the information from the forensic report into a mini tape-recorder.

The difficult task of portraying the character of Will Graham went to William B. Davis who performs admirably with a man who internalizes much of what he is thinking and feeling, afraid of slipping over the thin dividing line between his prey and himself once again, and for this reason it's not a showy part but Petersen conveys the angst-ridden persona of Graham extremely well.

The killer, Francis Dolarhyde, aka 'The Tooth Fairy', is given life in a chillingly effective performance from Tom Noonan, making 'The Tooth Fairy' a real and frightening presence. The scene where having captured the obnoxious trash tabloid journalist Freddie Lounds (a suitably oily performance from Stephen Lang - although you can't help feeling that even he doesn't deserve the fate he eventually gets) he forces him to look at slides of his victims past, present and future while quietly enquiring "Do you see?" is unswerving in the extreme.

It's the character of Dolarhyde that represents Mann's biggest departure from the book, as Dolarhyde makes a much earlier appearance in the book and his character is allowed to develop more

slowly in routine situations whereas in the film our first view of him is when he captures Lounds, and even then we only see him in a stocking mask. Only later do we see Dolarhyde at his work place and I get the impression that Mann was reluctant to let us see him any sooner. Also excluded completely are the chapters of the book that deal with Dolarhyde's unhappy childhood, showing how abuse in his formative years shaped his current psyche. By way of explanation, Mann told 'Video View' in March 1988, "I didn't deal with his past because I didn't want to get involved with all those flashbacks to his childhood. I didn't buy it and it slowed the action down too much." A fair point and with the film running at nearly two hours even without these scenes it's difficult to see how he'd have fitted them in even if he'd wanted to. Mann also revealed to 'Video View' that Harris had very little input on the film, "We talked on the phone just once or twice. We had very little contact."

All the minor roles are filled with equally good performances including Kie Grist as Graham's long-suffering wife, Dennis Farina as Jack Crawford, and a winning performance from Joan Allen as Reba McClane - it's another plus for the film that there aren't any star turns just fine performances, and the depth of characterization here should certainly come as a pleasant surprise to those who only know Mann's work through TV shows like 'Miami Vice' and 'Crime Story' and thought his art was all style and no content."

But saving the best until last we come to the remarkable performance by RSC actor Brian Cox as Dr Hannibal 'The Cannibal' Lecter, the man who put Will Graham into hospital with the mental and physical wounds that nearly killed him and led to his early retirement. Cox creates such a



frighteningly civilised and intelligent character that he seems to stand astride the whole film, omnipresent but unseen, following (or rather keeping one step ahead of) Will all the way. Such is his effectiveness that it comes as a major surprise on a second viewing that he only appears in three scenes and two of them nonnal - once seen, you'll probably only be able to think of the film, as I do, as **Brian Cox's MURKINER**!

If the dropping of the scenes of Dolarhyde's childhood is understandable then less explicable is the way many of the references to the 'Red Dragon' have been toned down or lost altogether. Key to the book, hence the title, it's a potent image that occurs throughout the story with the William Blake painting 'The Great Red Dragon and the Woman Clothed with the Sun' printed at the front of the book along with a quote from Revelation: "And there came a great red dragon..." and there's also the symbol carved on a tree near the Jacob's house which is a Chinese symbol considered lucky in gambling and is also a playing place from ash-jongg, representing the



F A N T A S Y N O P S I S

P A G E F I V E

red dragon. The painting is still seen in the film, glimpsed twice among Dolaryhyde's allies and the tree carving and it's explanation are also retained but their importance to Dolaryhyde is never really emphasized, for in the book the Red Dragon is also the darker side of Dolaryhyde's psyche and his obsession with the Blake painting makes the Red Dragon a controlling force, subverting the real Frances Dolaryhyde. This is still there in the film but nowhere near the extent it is in the book where Dolaryhyde has raging arguments with the Red Dragon side of himself as it taunts and terrorises him, driving him on to more killings as part of the process of 'becoming'. Blake's actual painting features in the most extraordinary passage of the book when Dolaryhyde, having discovered previously unknown feelings for a female co-worker, resolves to rid himself of the Dragon's influence and books a private viewing of the painting where it is housed at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and once there he proceeds to make a meal of it - literally! It's not sure this works on paper and it's certain it would have just been laughable on film.

The woman who inspires this bizarre act is Reba McLane who although blind wants as normal a life as possible and makes such of the running in their relationship. This is more fully explored in the book (forming some of the best written passages) while her blindness also has a more direct bearing on later events, but as these are changed in the film you'll have to read the book to find out what they are. But while their relationship is condensed in the film it still retains the full feeling that this is the last chance for Dolaryhyde before he fully succumbs to the Red Dragon and the key moment in their time together is retained where Dolaryhyde takes Reba to a zoo to touch an anaesthetised tiger awaiting an operation to have a tooth capped (while 'The Tooth Fairy', another sleeping tiger with teeth trouble, looks on) as the modern electronic rock soundtrack gives way to a lyrical, haunting tune played on a woodwind instrument, producing a magical memorable scene.

Obviously when adapting a novel for the screen changes have to be made and scenes have to be dropped, and some of the smaller but noteworthy changes include the scene where Lounds puts his arm around Will's shoulder when they have their picture taken for the article designed to trap 'The Tooth Fairy' while in the book it's Will who puts his arm around Lounds' shoulder and Lounds also survives briefly after being set alight by 'The Tooth Fairy', long enough to curse Graham for what he did, so adding to his inner turmoil; while Dolaryhyde's speech impediments, put to such good use in the book, are ditched in one film

In the film and might as well have been dropped altogether. And are film viewers likely to realise that 'The Tooth Fairy's teeth come from his Grandmother?

But the only time the film departs from the storyline of the book in any major way, apart from simple omissions, is during the finale which, a little disappointingly, degenerates into your standard cops v. killer shoot-out; sure it's excitingly done but you can't shake the feeling that you've seen it all before (which certainly isn't the case with all that's gone before), whereas in the book Dolaryhyde contrives to kill himself and so save Reba from the Red Dragon, something he seems to have succeeded in doing, but with another twenty pages still to go you can be sure Harris has a few surprises up his sleeve yet.

None of which is to decry Mann as it was only because I was so bowled over by the film that I sought out the book in the first place, and to redress the balance Mann has even managed to make a few improvements in adapting the book, dropping some extraneous scenes, and that dodgy picture-taking one, and making the scene where Lector re-routes his call to obtain Graham's home address much more believable when instead of simply re-dialling it's a stretching credibility to ask us to believe that a high-security prisoner would have free access to a phone without his calls at least being monitored, his phone is simply a receiver and he has to employ some ingenuity to get the call re-routed.

And Mann does deserve undiluted praise for keeping the film moving fluidly and coherently throughout its 119 minutes so that it never gets bogged down among the wealth of detail.

My only real complaint with the film is the insistence that it should always look good - such as Dolaryhyde's house, in the book it's an old three-storey house inherited from his Grandmother (along with her teeth!), but in the film it's a modern one-storey house complete with large glass windows (all the better for flying bodies to crash through) - when a dose of the sort of gritty realism seen in things like TV's 'Taggart' wouldn't have gone amiss (let's not forget that murder is an ugly business); but obviously this was never the intention and on its own terms it succeeds perfectly.

Surprisingly, the film received only a lukewarm reception on its initial release stateside, and so never got much of a push elsewhere, but as opinions are now changing as it builds a strong cult following and regularly appears on 'favourite films' lists such as those of Robert England and author Shaun Hutson. So when the follow-up novel was published last year it aroused considerable interest and is currently

being filmed for release later this year. The book - 'The Silence Of The Lombs', and worth reading just for the explanation of that title - is an even better read than 'Red Dragon', again continuing Harris' intricate plotting and strong characterisations, this time giving Lector a much bigger role as he again advances (and analyses) another Investigator (here female) in the hunt for another well-defined killer (this one with more than a little in common with Ed Geln) before events transpire to give Lector an even more central role. The filming of this book is an exciting prospect, especially as the superb Jodie Foster takes the lead role, although, incredibly (in the truest sense of the word), Brian Cox doesn't return in the role of Lector, which does dampen my enthusiasm somewhat. This time the part is taken by Anthony Hopkins, himself a terrific actor, but Cox has made the part so much his own that I fear he'll simply prove too hard an act to follow. I hope I'm wrong, but we shall see.

Meanwhile, if you're despairing that the cop thriller genre has grown stagnant (with *INTERNAL AFFAIRS* a notable exception) and all it has left to offer is an endless round of variations on the current vogue of offbeat pairings - black cop/white cop, American cop/Russian cop and even human cop/canine cop - then search out a copy of *HAMMUR* and see how it should be done. Or even better treat yourself to a copy of your own nov that it's available on budget at £9.99. MARK HURTON.

What the press said:

"One of the most stylish and compelling crime pictures of the past decade" - OBSERVER.

"Here's a thriller ordeal calculated to strum the steeliest of nerves" - THE DAILY MAIL.

"It's a rare treat to find a thriller as taut and gripping" - SUNDAY EXPRESS.

"There is unlikely to be a more stunningly executed thriller this year" - DAILY TELEGRAPH.

CAST & CREDITS

William Petersen (Will Graham), Kim Cattrall (Nolly Graham), Joan Allen (Reba McLane), Brian Cox (Dr Hannibal Lector), Dennis Farina (Jack Crawford), Stephen Lang (Freddie Lounds), Tom Noonan (Francis Dolaryhyde), David Seaman (Kevin Graham), Benjamin Hendrickson (Dr Chilton), Michael Talbot (Graham), Dan E. Butler (Jimmy Price), Michele Shay (Beverly Katz), Robin Mossley (Sarah), Paul Perri (Dr Sidney Bloom), Patricia Charbonneau (Mrs Sherman), Bill O'Connell (Reid Dandridge), Alex Hall (Eileen), Norman Snow (Springfield), Jim Zublena (Spurgin), Frankie Faison (Lt Flak), Gerardo Beaulieu (Young Women Housebuys), Joanne Camp (Mother On Plane), David A. Brooks (Mr Lounds), Lisa Ryall (Mrs Leeds), Chris Elliot (Zeller), Gary Chavara (Guard), Chris Glencoe (Attendant), Ken Colquhoun (Husband Housebuys), Ron Fitzgerald (Storage Guard #1), Dennis Quaid (Storage Guard #2), David Hicks (Dr Warfield), Sherman Malshe (Technician), Robin Trapp (Secretary #1), Lisa Winters (Secretary #2), Daniel T. Snow (State Trooper), Cynthia Chavet (Airport Waitress), King White (Swat Man), Mickey Lloyd (Atlanta Detective), Dawn Carman (Child On Plane), David Fitzmaurice (Bill), Robert A. Burton (Doctor), Steve Hogan (Helicopter Pilot), Mickey Pugh (Lead Jet Technician), Kim Shriner (Mrs Sherman), John Posey (Mr Jacob), Kristen Holby (Mrs Jacob), Greg Kelly (Jacob Boy #1), Brian Kelly (Jacob Boy #2), Ryan Langhorne (Jacob Boy #3), Hannah Coggiano (Sherman Child #1), Lindsey Fournier (Sherman Child #2), Jason Frait (Jada Child #1), Bryant Arrants (Lounds Child #2), Christopher Arrants (Lounds Child #3), Captain Melvin Clark, Officer Renee Ayala, Officer Dana





Dovey, Officer Stephen Hawkins, Officer Leonard Johnson, Officer Keith Pyles, Officer Michael Russell, Officer Michael Vitug, Officer Pat Williams, Officer Charles Yarbough (Svat Team Members), Bill Saitovich (Lloyd Bowman), Peter Maloney (Dr Dominick Prince), Michael D Roberts (The Runner).

Directed By Michael Mann; Produced by Richard Roth; Screenplay by Michael Mann; Based on the Novel 'RED DRAGON' by Thomas Harris; Executive Producer - Bernard Williams; Costume Designer - Colleen Atwood; Director of Photography - Dante Spinotti; Production Designer - Mel Bourns; Edited by Dov Hoenig; Original Music Composed & Performed by The Reds & Michael Rubins; Casting - Timmermann; Stunts by Bud Davis, Chuck Hart, Don Pulford, Bernard Johnson, Dennis Scott, Deborah Shuckman, Mike Haines, Larry Madlin; Unit Production Managers - Bernard Williams, Peter McIntosh, Jon Landau; First Assistant Director - Herb Geline; Second Assistant Directors - Nathalie Vadia, Michael Vexano; Visual Consultant - Gusmano Cesarotti; Post Production Supervisor - Don Kurt; Second Unit Director - Gusmano Cesarotti; Stunt Co-ordinator - Bud Davis; Art Director - Jack Blackman; Camera Operators - Enrique Lucidi, Michael Mann; Steadicam Operator - Randy Moisan; Camera Assistants - Bob Hall, Neals Mills Forey III; Focus Puller - Marco Secordotti; Still Photographer - Gusmano Cesarotti; Sound Mixer - John Mitchell; Boom Operator - Keith Pampling; Sound Assistant - Tom Passaro; Script Supervisor - Jane Randall; Propmaster & Standby - Mickey Pugh; Propmaster/Dressing - Charles Stewart; Assistant Property - Linda Kiffe; Chief Make-up - Stefano Fava; Special Make-up Designs - John Caglione Jr, Doug Drexler; Special Make-up Lab - Neal Mart; Assistant Make-up - Sharon Ilson; Ready Concept Artist - Joseph Bernard; Assistant Art Directors - Dean Teucher, Charles McCarty, Julie Plakani; Assistant Set Decorator - Steve Davis; Set Dressers - Tristram Bourne, David Bruce, John Kretschmer, Jean Travis; Gafferwoman - Dawn Snyder; Head Scenic Artist - Dean Teucher; Scenic Artist - Brian Stoltz; Hairdresser - Karen Bourne; Assistant to Costume Designer - John A Dunn; Wardrobe Supervisors - Ursula Schroeder, Bill Campbell; Wardrobe Assistants - Susie Hume, Harrell Taylor, Jennifer Bryan; Wardrobe Buyer - Tom McKinney; Additional Casting - Mark Finnannon; Extra Casting - Marc Bess; Gaffers - John C Farguson, Carlo Vinciguerra; Best Boy - Mark Moore; Electricians - Claudio Froilano, Mario Polerini, Bill Pieper, Steve Perry, Scott Davis; Rigging Electricians - Tim Woods, Davis Jamba; Chief Grip & Rigging Co-ordinator - Bobby Huber; Dolly Grip - Carlo Caporaso; Key Grip - Maurizio Micallizzi; Grips - Ettore Micallizzi, Mauro Diamanti; Best Boy/Grip - Jim Harrington; Grip/Rigger - Stephen Graves,

Dennis Zoppe; Generator Operator - Jay Hovler; Animal Trainer - David Hooks; Special Effects Supervisor - Joseph DiGaetano III; Special Effects Assistants - R J Holman, Larry Daniel Reid; Weapons Expert - Jim Zublena; Transportation Captains - Howard Davidson, Allan D Hamilton; Interpreter - John Alarino Jr; Publicist - Andy Marx; Construction Co-ordinator - Tony Dunne; Supervising Carpenter - Jim Hill; Shop Foreman - Jeep Stapleton; Re-Recording Mixer - Buzz Knudson; Recordists - Bob Glass, Don Diglio; Assistant Editor - Richard D Keefe; Second Assistant Editor - Dan Eigelro; Supervising Sound Editor - Robert R Burdages; Sound Editors - Scott A Hecker, John A Larsen, Bob Newlin, George H Anderson, Susan M Dudeck, Michael J Benavente, Charles E Smith, Jay Wilkinson, David A Arnold, Steve Born; Dolby Stereo Consultant - Jim Fitzpatrick; Looping Editor - J Paul Huntman; Music Editor - George A Martin; Location Manager/Atlanta - Elaine Smith; Location Manager/Washington DC - Stuart A Neumann; Location Manager/St Louis - Steve Roberts; Location Manager/Chicago - Mike Malone; Location Manager/Florida - Mike Chavez; Location Managers/Virginia - Robert Gerdini, Shiro Ito;

Product Co-ordinators - Jane Barlowe, Julie Overdorfer, Nikol Hegarty; Assistant Production Co-ordinator - Kay Joyner; Assistants to Mr Mann - Judith M Worth, Theresa Curtin; Assistant to Mr Williams - Ron Lynch; DGA Trainee - Adam Worley; Production Assistant - Tristram S Blehop; Location Office Secretary - Cindy Grey; Secretaries to Mr Mann - Steven Holmes, Christine Beer, Randee Lynne Jensen; Auditor - Patrick A Howell; Assistant Auditor - Jane Rayleigh; Post Production Auditor - Marianne Scanlon; Re-Recorded at Todd A.O. Glen Glenn; Original Motion Picture Soundtrack on MCA Records, "Graceland's Theme" Performed by Michael Rubin, "Selin" Performed by Kitaro, "Freeze" Performed by Klaus Schulze, "Evaporation" Performed by Shriekback, "Cosmicent" Performed by Shriekback, "The Big Bush" Performed by Shriekback, "Strong As I Am" Performed by The Prime Movers, "In A Gadda Da Vida" Performed by Iron Butterfly, "Heartbeat" Performed by Red 7; Post Production Services by Todd A.O. Glen Glenn; Sound Services - Blue Light Sound; Camera & Lenses supplied by Joe Danton Cameras Ltd; Publicity - Rogers & Cowan; Advertising Concepts - Dyer/Kahn; Insurance Provided by Great Northern Brokerage Corp NY; Travel Arrangements by Beverly Cherep; Titles & Opticals - Pacific Title; Photographed on Eastman Film; Colour by Technicolor, 1985.

Running Time 115 mins.

DEG - DE LAURENTIIS ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.
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MANHUNT



Peter Cushing this is your life



Wednesday 21st February 1990 turned out to be a great day for devotees of Hammer and horror throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain, as Michael Aspel crompt up on one of fantasy film's greatest legends, Peter Cushing, to utter those immortal words, "This is Your Life".

It was a programme rich in character and sentiment as tributes were ushered in from various stars, friends and colleagues. Among those in attendance were; Ursula Andress, Caroline Munro, David Rintoul, Dave Prowse, Erle Vase, Freddie Jones, Joanna Linney and Peter Ustinov. Two other important contributions were made from Sir John Mills and, of course, his arch-enemy from various films, Christopher Lee (it was however a great shame that the latter couldn't be there on the day).

Sir John Mills said that "...you are very underrated... I think that you're one of the best actors that I've ever worked with in my life and certainly the most generous" and Peter Ustinov added that Peter was "the kindest, the nicest, the most intelligent, most talented and, by far, the sanest of all the mad professors!"

Clips from several films and shows were shown to illustrate Peter's talents and included were: SHE, AT THE EARTH'S CORE, STAR WARS, THE LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF, "Hercules & His", 1964, THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, DRACULA, THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA and THE MASKS OF DEATH.

A fitting tribute to a real English gentleman who is truly one of the all-time greats and it would be very nice if Thames Television were to release it on a video cassette for all the thousands of fans that missed its showing (they could even do a double-bill with the Christopher Lee 'Life' that was screened in the early seventies!). I enjoyed it immensely and have only one complaint, it was all over far too quickly - 'Step Out'!

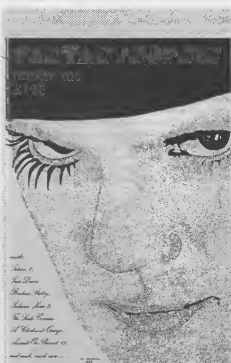
PAUL J. BROWN.

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SHOCK AROUND THE CLOCK 4

11th - 12th August 1990

Another year and another 'Shock' - the important horror festival - but a change of venue this time, after three successful outings at everybody's favourite cinema, The Scala, 'Shock Around The Clock' has moved across London to 'The Electric Cinema' in Portobello Road.

After a couple of minor hitches in obtaining my ticket (which had risen £5,000 from last year!) I caught an early train into London on the Saturday morning and arrived with a fellow 'Shockophile' (Hi, Gagi!) at the rapidly forming queue, but not before having to fight my way through the hoards of tourists that were clambering all over the Portobello Road market. As with last year I met a few friends from the front who had saved a welcome place for me and I was greeted by editors who were selling their wares (quite nicely too) and I handed out a few flyers for this issue (many thanks go to Ken Miller and Rob Bewick for helping out). At 12 noon the doors opened and we moved our way forward into the minuscule 'Electric' foyer where joint co-ordinators Alan Jones and Stefan Jaworszyn collected the tickets from our sweat paws (what happened to the T-shirt guys?). We then found some central seats and made ourselves at home, waiting for the festivities to begin. As with last year my band was bigger than anyone else's (11!!) and I had to wedge it around mine feet to get comfortable.

This year's line up looked especially inviting and there was one particular special guest announced that everybody was eager to meet (most of the event was being filmed by BSB - so look out for it you satellite Junkies!)...

12.25pm: The Warner logo shows up on the screen and the first movie unreeled itself, the directorial return of Roger Corman, **FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND**. An all-star cast (John Hurt, Raul Julia, Bridget Fonda, Jason Patric and INXS front man Michael Hutchence) which on paper looked very promising, but as the story unfolded, which can only be described as a cross between **BACK TO THE FUTURE** and Hammer Films. It became blatantly clear that Corman had rested for far too long, and that he should either find a better story or stick to producing! Adapted from Brian Aldiss' novel, John Hurt plays a scientist, on the verge of causing Armageddon, who accidentally creates a time portal in which he is transported back to the time of Baron Frankenstein and gets mixed up

with the infamous experiments. The acting is hammy, the matte paintings bad, the script a joke, the monster like a 50's reject and it really is a scream - a good laugh interspersed with some 80's gore and it's no wonder that it's having a hard time getting a release! (Alan Jones said that we may never see it again!) - 3/10.

The first two films were being screened with hardly a gap in between them and at 2:10pm the second film began... the BSWC '18' was greeted by boos and Alan boomed out "calm down, [it's uncut]!!" and BLUE STEEL got underway and marked another genre reform, yes, Jamie Lee Curtis bled. In a gore splattered psycho thriller, and with a script by Eric McRae THE HITCHER Red and directed by Kathryn Near Dark Bigelow we knew we were in for a treat. JLC plays a newly recruited cop who gets into some very deep shit with a maniac (Ron Silver) who buys stocks and shares by day and deals out death by night with a stolen gun. Curtis and Silver are brilliant (so too are Clancy Brown and Louise Fletcher) and it certainly lives up to expectations. I won't dwell on the plot as I don't want to give too much away, but this is a film that you will be seeing a lot of as Vestron will give it a well deserved big push and it looks all set to be a big hit. Know what I'm going to which is where I reveal its only let down 9/10 for most of the film but the ending only registers a 7/10 - it's a goodie though and don't let that put you off!

Before the next film we had two trailers to view, the first was a wildly delirious oriental gun 'n' gore fest known as THE KILLER which I for one will be looking out for; and then a shortish one for Klaus Sutherland's newie, FLATLINERS, a supernatural out-of-body type experience, which again looked quite good.

within the hour! Realizing that the cell was not a hoax he tells the occupants of the diner who arrive a while also believe the story and they all decide to make a dash for the airport. The rest of this superbly paced film concerns what everybody sub-consciously fears and their race for survival - the question is, Is it all paranoid nonsense? PheW! A modern classic if ever I saw one - this will play almost endlessly at midnight runs everywhere, and was for me the best film on show. The plot is so good that it will keep you guessing right up to the end. The two main characters, the striking polished, the eerily dressed and the direction (by Steve De Jarnatt) were accomplished. **MIRACLE MILE** will be getting a video release very soon and should be savoured immediately. I can go no higher - 10/10.

that can pull publicly for that? At 8.00pm the stage was lit for Clive Barker who spent half an hour chatting with Stefan feeding him questions. The banter between them quickly developed into comedy double-act routine which caused quite a bit of laughter and applause throughout the auditorium, especially with Clive's thoughts on Margaret Thatcher (Ben Elton beware!). Clive was also there to lead us into the next film **NIGHTBREED**, and detailed us on its downfall in the USA. He also told us that his next project is going to be a remake of **THE MUMMY** for Universal! **NIGHTBREED** came on at 8.30pm and was for most people a film that they had wanted to see, nearly everyone had either read the novel or looked at publicity pictures but were quite unsure of what to expect on screen, and also how would David Cronenberg fare as an actor? The film tells the story of a young troubled hero called Boone, who gets himself killed as a result of his psychiatrist's devilish deeds (Cronenberg as a serial slasher) and ends up joining a pack of monsters and deformities that live below a graveyard in a place known as Midam. Cronenberg's character knows of the place and knows that the creatures can cause his downfall, and attempts to lure the police to the area so that the monsters can be destroyed, enabling him to carry on with his killing spree. Can the newly transformed Boone unmask the killer and save his new 'friends' before it's too late? You'll just have to watch it and find out for yourself! I don't think that I've ever seen so many monsters in one film before (about 200 according to make-up man Geoff Porttass) which marks it as something a little different in the first place and it also stands alone as one of the first attempts to depict the creatures as the good guys pitting themselves against the evils of man. This may just be a bit of a stretch to swallow for the casual viewer as a lot of the proceedings occur in a very matter of fact way. I found it an enjoyable experience and I marvelled at some of the technical achievements on show. I also admired what Barker is trying to do and I'm sure that it will get a better reception here than it did in America, especially on video. A worthy 9/10, oh, and I nearly forgot, Cronenberg shouldn't give up his day job [nice gag though]!

Before the first film we were in for a very special treat, Alan introduced us to his idol, yes, Dario Argento, Italy's master horror director walked onto the stage to speak to his British fans for the first time! He was greeted with rapturous applause and surprised us all when he actually spoke in English (very broken I'll admit, but have you heard my Italian!). He thanked us for supporting his films and then attempted to explain his thoughts on the censoring system and was right from the bottom of his heart - don't worry Dario, we don't understand their reasoning either! Not only did he stop and talk but he agreed to a signing session (in which he scribbled his name over everything from photo sleeves to T-shirts) and then had his photo taken by all who had brought their cameras. Thank you Dario for taking some time out of your busy day for making his visit possible in the first place!

As Dario departed his latest film opened in front of us, it was 11.30pm and TWO EVIL EYES began.

was really looking forward to this especially as it marked yet another return, Argento and George A Romero together again. The film involves two stories, each one representing an adaptation of an Edgar Allan Poe tale. Romero has the first shot with an episode entitled 'The Facts In The Case Of M. Valdemar' and really is back in the old style of horror film making. Adrienne Barbeau plays a bitch (again) who is married to a wealthy old man (Valdemar) and now that he is on his death-bed she, along with her crooked doctor lover, is attempting to swindle away all of his cash. But unluckily for the partners in crime he dies too soon and the couple hide away his body in the freezer in order to wait for some legalities to pass. However, Valdemar died whilst under the doc's hypnosis and although he appears dead, his mind is very much alive in a limbo world and he returns to haunt the lovers. Argento's episode is called 'The Black Cat', Harvey Keitel plays Rod Usher, a crime photographer, who gradually declines into a murderous slob after his live-in girlfriend takes in a stray black cat that just happens to be a reincarnation of an old victim's pet. A good film, but on the whole a little disappointing considering the talent involved. Romero's segment is painfully slow, with Barbeau being the best thing on screen (he is looking a lot older though). There is a nice gory pay-off but the zombie leaves a lot to be desired. Argento's work in the second part is typically his: i.e. lots of blood, flashy photography and impressive lighting. Keitel is very good and gives the part the right air of menace. Flashy stuff but Argento has been too restrained by the American system. Two sets of marks here - Romero, 6/10, and Argento, 8/10. Expect cuts when released.

Richard Stanley, the director of **HARDWARE** (which was next on the agenda), was the next invited guest to appear on stage and came across as a likeable but very nervous kind of guy who wasn't sure how to hold the microphone. Anyway, he gave us some hot snippets on the making of the film (whilst outside of the Electric a tap-lady came and asked him for some money - he was about to tell her where to get off when she exclaimed "Oh, hi you... I've been in your film...") and some other things (very brilliant stuff!), but didn't really get his points over very well (it must have been the weight of that hat and flying jacket!). We were told that the US release was having to have ten whole minutes removed to avoid the dreaded 'X' rating! He also indicated that his next film was going to be a psycho-slasher-romance called **DUSTER**.

1.50am: **HARDWARE**, as this was the only film on show that I had seen (check out my review in the Blinford's section) I thought that it might be a good idea to get some sleep - but I couldn't, as I enjoyed the action just as much as I had the first time. Ten minutes missing though will kill it stone dead 9/10.

3.35am: Peter BAD TASTE Jackson's latest piece of organised chaos - **MEET THE FEEBLES**, which can only be described as 'THE MUPPETS TAKE CRACK!!!'. It is a wholly original, wildly manic, splatterathon that features every bodily fluid known to man and woman (and puppet!) with much in the way of sex, splatter, shit and vomit on graphic display and it's amazing to think that they're all puppet! Yes, they are crude but they are also very touching and funny creations. I enjoyed it. Lots of wonderful moments but because of its very nature and grossness it looks very unlikely that it will ever get a release over here. 8/10.

Another shortish break and another guest, this time it was Melinda McDonald, who is a writer for 'Fangoria', 'Gorezone' and 'L'Ecran Fantastique', and she was specifically there to give some gossip from the set of the next film, but she came across as a typical hysterical American female and her 'gossip' fell completely flat! Enough of this and back to the movie - 5.25am: **WARRIOR COP 2**. The movie opens with a reprisal of the ending from part one, and yes, you guessed it, Matt Cordell didn't die! He's back with a

vengeance (the make-up better than before - the rasher of bacon has now disappeared from his face!) and he's not alone. He has teamed up with a serial-killer and between them they start ripping and tearing their way through plenty of flesh. Bruce Campbell and Laurence London are back, but are completely under-utilised, or, dare I say it, wasted. It's all left to Robert LICENCE TO KILL David to hunt down the sloco-doo. Directed with some style by good old Larry Cohen but really it's just routine splat-stuff with nothing unusual to offer. This was the only film that had me clutching at sleep, but a few cups of coffee and some raw determination and I made it! 5/10. I just hoped that the final film would be a goodie as last year's was the worst!

6.55am: The finale to a memorable night and what better a movie to end it on than the unrated **LEATHERFACE: A TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE PART III**. Alan and Stefan had obviously learned from last year's error and presented us with not only a first rate sequel, but, nearly the best film of the event! The opening credits are wonderfully macabre, with Leatherface himself preparing a fresh mask of human skin! For some unexplained reason **PART 2** is ignored and director Jeff Burr presents us with a story that carries on about seven years after Hooper's original, with the discovery of the family's stash of bodies and bits! The old family are gone and Leatherface has taken to living with another clan, all equally as sick as the first and some even sicker! A young couple get accidentally drawn into the cannibalistic madness and get some help from survival expert Ken DAWN OF THE DEAD Force. Relentless pressure, mucho blood and gore, twisted personas - it has it all, a very intense production that delivers the goods. Bad news time - like **PART 2**, it has been refused a BBFC certificate, bastards!! See it anyway you can. 9 1/2/10.

8.20am: And that was it, everyone hauled their numb-bums out of their sweat-soaked seats (although it wasn't half as hot as the Scala was!) and said their goodbyes. A thoroughly enjoyable occasion with no hitches. The Electric had better seats, clean toilets, good coffee and excellent sound facilities - my only complaints would have to be about the lack of decent air-conditioning and no foyer to mingle in. Well done guys, once again you did us proud, see ya next year!!

PAUL J. BROWN.

HAVE YOU ZINE IT

continuation from page nine

SAMHAIN

No 23 - £1.55 - 40 A4 pages.

Dario Argento, Lloyd Kaufman, The Witch Who Came From The Sea, James Herbert, Linda Blair, Fanzines, Joanne Seller, Ted Sorel, Reviews, Shock 4.

John Guillidge, 19 Elm Grove Road, Topham, Exeter, Devon, EX3 0EQ.

SHEER FILTH!

No 8 - 2 - 32 A5 pages.

David Friedman, Herschell Gordon Lewis, Ilona Staller, Shock 3, Reviews.

David Flint, 39 Holly Street, Offerton, Stockport, SK1 4DP.

STARBURST

No 146 - £1.70 - 56 A4 pages.

Rick Baker, Dario & Claudio Argento, Willard Pugh, Ron Perlman, Ghost, Robocop 2, Reviews.

Stephen Payne, Visual Imagination, PO Box 371, London, SW14 8JL.

STARLOG

No 158 - £2.75 - 76 A4 pages.

Flintlines, Sharon Stone, Rachel Tootian, Christopher Lee, Frances McDormand, Irvin Kershner, Russell Johnson, Henry Silva, R G Armstrong, I Come In Peace.

David McDonnell, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, USA.

THE TERRORNAUTS

No 8 - \$5.00 - 34 A4 pages.

Kathryn Bigelow, Brother Theodore, Linnea Quigley, Carnival of Souls, Harry Alan Towers, Day Of The Triffids (BBC), Clive Barker, Sante Sengre, Aracnophobia, Twin Peaks, It's A Wonderful Life, Fanzines, Reviews.

Donna Fischer, 366 N Spaulding Avenue #12, Los Angeles, CA 90036, USA.

continued on page sixteen

COMPETITION



SHOCKER

Win your very own VHS copy of Wes Craven's **SHOCKER**, courtesy of Guild Home Video and Wrenson Beck, by answering the following 'shocking' questions:

Name the follow up to **THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW**

What was Mario Bava's last film called?

Which Peter Cushing film featured zombie Nazis rising from the depths?

Send your answers to the editorial address (along with your own name and address) and mark your envelope "SHOCKER CON". The first two correct answers drawn after the closing date will win

CLOSING DATE : 31/1/91

UNDER THE COVERS

A COLUMN FOR MAGAZINE COLLECTORS by RAY STEWART

There has been a lot of activity on the film magazine scene since the last issue of FANTASYNOPSIS.

Unfortunately, for the most part it has been a case of the activity ceasing when it comes to horror and fantasy magazines.

American titles, HORROR FAN and SLAUGHTER HOUSE, which first hit the presses around the end of 1988, went out hand in hand just one year later.

SLAUGHTER HOUSE, which was published bi-monthly, ended after issue five while HORROR FAN, a quarterly, quit after issue four.

Of the two, HORROR FAN was easily the best, and would have succeeded had it not been for the quality of the existing horror mags on the market. I refer, of course, to the Starlog Communications series of magazines. Not content with FANGORIA and GOREZONE on the horror scene, they introduced a third, TOXIC HORROR, at the end of last year.

All the die-hard, excuse the pun, FANGORIA fans I know are just as keen to collect the sister publications, even though they may have difficulty in telling them apart!

Nowadays, with film magazines costing around £3 a shot the horror fans are not only buying to read, but buying to collect. So assuming the horror fan "must have" FANGORIA, GOREZONE and TOXIC, and in all probability STARLOG as well, that works out at well over £100 a year. Put it that way and in these days of Poll Tax (how come no-one has written about that? Is a "horror" magazine??) and higher interest rates it's not surprising that fans are unlikely to add to their magazine bill by taking yet another title. HORROR FAN and SLAUGHTER HOUSE were reasonably entertaining mags and the fact that between them they produced only nine issues makes them more collectable and valuable than if they were still around today. HORROR FAN No.1 is already rare and collector's can expect to pay anywhere between £5 and £10 for it.

WORLDS OF HORROR and DEEP RED are other American titles which seem to have ceased.

In the UK the trend is the same. SHOCK XPRESS ended with Vol.3 No.1 last summer (SHOCK XPRESS will rise again soon as a yearbook - Ed.), leaving SAMHAIN to claim the title of Britain's longest running horror film magazine.

Late in 1989 came Marvel's attempt to get back into the fantasy/sf genre with FANTASY ZONE, but it was only a brief excursion taking in six issues and ending in March this year.

FANTASY ZONE made, in my opinion, a terrible start contents-wise, but steadily improved and by the time of its final issue had matured to certain extent. Later, a small paragraph in DR. WHO MONTHLY announced FZ's demise "due to poor sales".

For a new fantasy/horror/sf mag to survive today

it needs a Nineties approach. FANTASY ZONE was in the old style.

General film magazines too are experiencing a lean time. PHOTOPLAY and FILMS AND FILMING, two of the longest established film mags in the UK have both bitten the dust, and the only fresh face to emerge is the excellent EMPIRE. Very few are saying anything good about STARBURST these days!

Before this column gets bogged down in all this doom and gloom, let me mention that the fanzine business is on the up with some enthusiastic, well produced titles around. These include FANTASYNOPSIS, of course, an unusual one called UNGUAI which deals with anything shocking and primitive, EYEBALL which reviews horror and sleaze, OAK STAR a fantasy based English fanzine (not to be confused with the Italian one of the same name), Ken Miller's IMAGINATOR, THE JOHN CARPENTER FILE ... (for more info on these titles and many more check out our HAVE YOU ZINE IT7 section. Ed)

Who knows, by the time you read this there could be yet more changes in the film magazine industry. Personally, I believe magazines today just don't match up to a few years ago. Perhaps my cynical view is what comes of getting around thirty film magazines a month!

Moving on, have you heard of FANTAZONE? A friend brought me a copy from America last Autumn and I rate it as one of the most attractive magazines I received last year. It's a mix of STARLOG/FANGORIA type material with Freddy rubbing shoulders with Indiana Jones. I don't think it has crossed the seas to the UK yet but if and when it does I reckon it could be a winner. I got issue two and I am not sure whether it was going to be published on a regular basis. Anyone update us on this one?

I'm told that back issues of FANGORIA are selling for over £6 in well known magazine stores. What a rip-off. I have almost completed my collection with nine copies costing £2.50 each from a specialist store in Northern Ireland - and that included most of the early issues!

Fans are buzzing at the expectation of receiving the latest issue of LITTLE SHOPPE OF HORRORS. It's a double issue comprising numbers 10 and 11 and will set you back nearly £7. Who cares about money just get me a copy!

BATHMAN has come and gone - for a little while at least - but left behind is a mountain of material about the film. I have a friend who reckons that in a few decades BATHMAN collections will fetch big bucks. I'm not so sure as yet. There are thousands of collectors around now as compared to when the last BATHMAN film was released in 1966. My advice would be to collect material on a low budget movie which is so bad that it is bound to attract a cult following in the year 20

something.

Don't forget to drop me a line, c/o the FANTASYNOPSIS address, if you have any questions concerning film magazines.

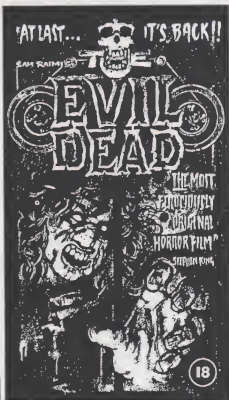
Finally, does anyone out there have a copy of MONSTER MAG #2, if so drop us a line and also tell us what is contained within its ultra-rare pages!

Until next time, keep reading.

If you enjoy reading Ray's column you'll probably enjoy his own zine called MAGAZINES OF THE MOVIES, check out the address in HAVE YOU ZINE IT7 - Ed.

COMPETITION

WIN A VHS COPY OF



FANTASYNOPSIS in conjunction with PALACE and WINDSOR BECK have two copies of Sam Raimi's classic THE EVIL DEAD to give away. All you have to do to win is answer this simple question:

What was the title of Raimi's promo film that later became THE EVIL DEAD?

Send your answer to the editorial address along with your own name and address (marking your envelope 'EVIL DEAD COMP') and the first two correct answers drawn by the closing date will win. Good luck!

CLOSING DATE: 31/1/91

Bloched

VISION

ROBERT BLOCH, The Creator of Norman Bates, Talks Exclusively to FANTASYNOPSIS

Born in April 1917, Robert Bloch is, without a doubt, a legend in the world of horror.

His work has spanned over fifty-five years and in that time he has written more than fifty books, over four hundred (count 'em) short stories and he has been responsible for a stack of film and TV screenplays/ideas. His film credits include STRAIT JACKET (1963), THE NIGHT WALKER (1964), THE SKULL (1965), THE PSYCHOPATH (1966), TORTURE GARDEN (1967), THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD (1970), ASYLUM (1972) and many more, but he is still, to this very day, best remembered for a story he wrote way back in 1959, a story that shocked the world and was described by the press as "fictly terrifying" and "faptrol and bloodcurdling". I am of course talking about the grandfather of all the stalk and slashers, the oft-imitated but never bettered, PSYCHO! The following interview was conducted in February 1990, read on...

PAUL J. BROWN: When did you first realize that you had a talent for scaring people and what was your first success in writing horror?

ROBERT BLOCH: I sold my first story to WEIRD TALES magazine in 1934 - and when it appeared - in the January 1935 issue - my doom was sealed.

What actually frightens you?

Giving interviews!

How hard was it to gain literary respect as a horror writer?

There was no way to do so in pulp magazine writing. I received no critical attention until the publication of my first collection, THE OPENER OF THE WAY, in 1945.

Some of your books, such as PSYCHO and AMERICAN GOTHIC, are based on real life killers. How would you feel if a killer based his crimes on something that you had written?

Surprised, because my killers are not shown to be happy, well-adjusted individuals whose problems are solved by murdering, who would want to imitate their behaviour?

Murderers like Ed Gein have recently become cult figures, do you find this disturbing?

Murderers have been cult figures throughout the past hundred years, at least - remember Jack The Ripper? Of course you do - he's a cult figure, I except this as a commonplace of our society.

What are your views on the modern horror writers, any favourites?

I don't read enough in the genre to justify offering a valid opinion. There's just too much to assimilate.

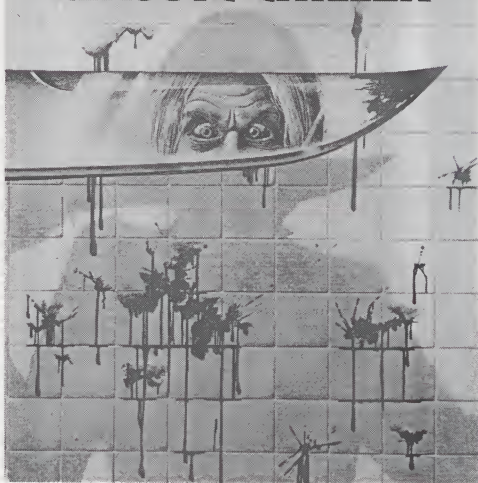
Do you get to read much in the way of fan publications?

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CORGI

PSYCHO

ROBERT BLOCH'S CLASSIC CHILLER



FANTASYNOPSIS

PAGE THIRTEEN

The same holds true for fanzines - and I must budget time for writing, not reading.

I understand from an article in FEAR magazine that you used to correspond with HP Lovecraft, what was he like as a person?

I knew him personally only through his letters. To me he was a kind, erudite, caring man who gave generously of himself.

How far into the writing of PSYCHO were you when you first realised that it was really something special?

I knew from the start that it was different; I intended it to be. I found out that it was "special" from reading the book reviews.

Does it upset you when people refer to PSYCHO as Hitchcock's baby rather than yours?

Ever since the invention of the auteur theory; most people assume that directors "create" their

files. And it has always been billed as "Alfred Hitchcock's PSYCHO."

Why didn't you write the screenplay?

I was told Hitchcock asked about me - and his agents told him I "wasn't available", and sold his one of their clients instead - at the time I lived 2000 miles away from Hollywood.

Were you happy with the changes from your original story?

Yes - such changes were necessary to transform the verbal into visual without giving away the plot.

How did you rate Anthony Perkins as Norman Bates?

An excellent choice. If he'd been older, as in the novel, he'd have been suspected by audiences immediately.

Why is it that PSYCHO still looks good today?



Because it still is good, thanks to Hitchcock.

How do you feel about the film's two sequels and the TV movie based around the Bates Motel?

I have never seen them, though I did read the film scripts. I suspect the TV movie stinks.

You wrote the screenplay for another effective black-and-white picture called STRAIT-JACKET, were you pleased with the finished film?

Yes, except for the moments when director Bill Castle decided to "improve" the script by adding bits of explicit violence which neither Joan Crawford or I approved! But on the whole, it was what I intended it to be - a psychological thriller.

What was William Castle like to work with and did he have you involved in one of his cine-glimicks for the promotion of the film?

Bill was an expert on low-budget films and their exploitation, but in this case he didn't use a gimmick. Instead, I wrote a five-minute promo film called HOW TO COMMIT A MOVIE MURDER, with Joan, Bill and myself as its cast. I wish I had a print! (So would I - Ed!!)

How did you become involved with Milton Subotsky and Amicus films?

Amicus purchased my story, THE SKULL OF THE MARQUIS DE SADE, which Milton scripted as THE SKULL. Then I was asked to do an original - by well, it became THE PSYCHOPATH.

How much involvement did you have on the Amicus projects?

On our subsequent anthology films, Milton would outline a "wraparound" premise, which I'd then script, and then adapt three or four stories of mine to fill the cinematic sandwich. I visited English studios twice during shoots, but only as a spectator.

I read that you were not happy with the way your 'Maelstrom Of Horror' segment turned out in ASTYLUM, have you seen the new version from the hit series MONSTERS which goes back to your original idea of using clay men?

No, I haven't seen it, but I'd like to. The wind-up toys in ASTYLUM were easy on the budget, but hard on one's credibility, story-wise.

The films that you've been associated with have generally featured good actors and actresses, any particular favourites amongst them?

The "cinematic sandwiches" that I mentioned

A new-
and altogether
different-
screen
excitement!!!

ALFRED
HITCHCOCK'S
PSYCHO

ANTHONY
PERKINS
VERA
MILES
JOHN
GAVIN
MARTIN
BALSAM
JOHN
McINTIRE
JANET
LEIGH
MARION
CRANE
ALFRED
HITCHCOCK
Screenplay by
JOSEPH
STEFANO
A PARAMOUNT
Production

before contained their fair share of him. But I've been blessed with Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Joan Crawford, Barbara Stanwyck, Jack Palance and other fine talents.

A lot of writers feel cheated when they see a finished film adaptation of their work, have you been happy with how your writings have fared on the screen?

Not entirely, in any case. It's a matter of certain scenes or segments that work, married by others which don't.

You did some work for Hammer Films (the biggest rivals to Amicus) on their TV series JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN, were you ever asked to do anything for their big screen projects?

Hammer had already started winding down on feature films by then. I met Sir James Carreras only once, at a party at his London house; I worked with Joan Harrison, who produced the Hitchcock TV shows, and brought me over for this series to do two scripts.

Have you ever had a desire to direct a film project of your own?

Desire, yes - stamina, no.

Would you like to work with any of the modern horror directors (Cronenberg, Romero, Craven, etc) and what are your views on their style of film making?

I don't think their styles and my stories would enjoy a symbiotic (or cinematic) relationship.

Do you approve of film censorship and the whole workings of bodies like the MPAA and the BBFC?

I believe everything is a matter of personal taste. That's why we have vegetarians, and cannibals.

Which medium would you rather write for and why?

Print offers the most freedom, and the broadest range.

Looking back on your long career, what do you have been the high and low points?

My high points have consisted of meeting creative and talented people I'd never have come to know if I hadn't been a writer. The low points were the years I wasted beforehand, just being a child.

Have you fulfilled all your writing ambitions?

Ask me again in another fifty-five years.

It's a detail

My sincere thanks go to Robert Bloch and Forrest J. Ackerman for making this interview possible.

FS #2 COMPETITION RESULTS

Congratulations to the following people for winning prizes in last issue's competitions:

WARRLOCK
Martin Valdoock, David Barreclough and Jacquetta Lawrence.

THEY LIVE
Paul Flanagan and Peter Moffitt.

BOOK WORM

REVIEWS OF THE PRINTED PAGE

BATMAN - DIGITAL JUSTICE by Pepe Moreno

Titan Books, 1990, Hardback - £14.95

With a quick flick through, this is quite an impressive looking book, nice shaded colour and printed on good stock, though the figures look a bit like Richard Corben's characters copied onto graph paper.

I don't know a great deal about computers but I was impressed by the technology that must have been used, as we are informed that this book is completely computer generated. All that aside though, does it work? Not for me I'm afraid, I have a great deal of respect for Mr. Moreno. I thought that his REBEL and GROUND ZERO were wonderful pieces of work. I always thought that he had a great talent for drawing machines in action. The car chase scenes in REBEL and the battle in GROUND ZERO testify to this. Unfortunately this does not transfer to 'Digital Justice' as all the vehicles look like bits of Lego. Still I shouldn't knock the man as it must take a lot of skill to operate a computer to this standard, but my own thoughts are that he should stick to pens and brushes.

Right... the story is set in the future and Gotham City's computers have been invaded by a 'Joker Virus', but luckily, years earlier, Bruce Wayne had programmed his own computer to combat such an eventuality. It also includes Commissioner Gordon's grandson donning the cape and matching ensemble. However, the much publicised ending, isn't!

I have never been a great lover of the BATMAN comics and this will do nothing to change that view. Having said that, it does have some visually interesting bits, but £14.95 is a lot to pay for this small comfort. In the end this is really only for die-hard Bat Fans or for lovers of computer art.

BJ.

DEVIAN'T by Harold Schechter

New English Library, 1989, Paperback - £3.99

"A boy's best friend is his mother."

DEVIAN'T is the first full and accurate account of the crimes of Ed Gein (that's Gein as in "keen" not Gein/line), the Wisconsin farmer whose gruesome activities in and around his hometown of Plainfield in the 1950's inspired several films including two of the finest horror films ever made, PSYCHO (1960) and THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE (1974); and the book is appropriately subtitled "The horrifying true story of Ed Gein - the original psycho".

It's certainly a book that needed writing as it quickly becomes clear that all you've read previously hasn't told half the story or even been half-way accurate. But now it can all be told: Gein's worship of his mother and her influence over him (which extended beyond the grave); Ed's favoured reading matter, which included crime magazines, stories of cannibalism and head shrinking, and tales of Nazi atrocities such as those of Ilse Koch, "The Bitch of Buchenwald" who is said to have used human skin for lampshades and book bindings; the reaction of the people of Plainfield when they discovered what had been going on in their midst, and the lengths they went to insure that no-one should profit from Gein's now-found notoriety; and the irony of the results of his capture, i.e. he now got the attention and companionship he'd been forced to seek among the dead, along with a warm cell and regular meals which lead to a dramatic

increase in his weight and general health.

Indeed, such is the extent of the information that Schechter has to impart that the discovery and details of Gein's deeds are revealed in chapter 14 of this 44 chapter (274 page) book. Schechter then goes on to draw considerable suspense from whether or not all of Ed's victims were in fact murdered or, as he claimed, taken from local graveyards during what he said were frequent night-time visits there; as unlikely as it seemed that he would constantly open graves without leaving any trace, the incompetence of the two murders he did admit to (the second leading to his arrest) along with the discovery of yet more (bits of) bodies lead to the controversial decision to open some of the graves he said he'd plundered...

Other chapters detail such diverse aspects of the case as psychiatric reports on Gein and the aptly of Ed Gein jokes that flourished briefly in the late 50's (Example: "why did they have to keep the heat on in Ed Gein's house?" "So the furniture wouldn't get goose bumps"), as well as the intense media interest in the case which led to the distortion and even invention of stories when there was nothing new to report (some things never change), one of particular interest to film fans suggested that Ed was a keen taxidermist... This wealth of detail is somewhat at odds with Schechter's insistence that Gein must have indulged in necrophilia when there was absolutely no evidence to substantiate the claim, and Gein always denied it while being open and honest about everything else, simply because it was often a feature of similar cases; but this is a minor point as it's generally a balanced, well-written account and such a compelling read that it's a must for anyone with the slightest interest in the exploits of Wisconsin's most famous son.

Another minor quibble is at the lack of any photographs, when pictures of the victims (before if not after), Gein's house and Gein himself (the one on the cover looks like a pencil sketch and simply isn't sufficient) would have helped build up a mental picture. A map of the area would have been valuable too.

Anyway, we now have the definitive account of the life and times of Ed Gein - so what's the overall opinion of the man? Well, surprisingly, you don't end up hating or despising him the way you do when reading about someone like that wretched specimen of humanity John Reginald Christie, you may even feel sorry for Ed who, in many ways, can be viewed as a victim of circumstance; totally dedicated to his downhearted mother until her death which left his feeling betrayed and alone, and almost totally ignored by the townsfolk of Plainfield - perhaps if they had taken their later interest in his a little earlier or listened to their children's stories of Ed's "shrunken heads" (in reality his collection of skinned faces, some of which were stuffed with paper and hung on the walls), he'd have been detected and stopped sooner - and you can't help wondering how history would have viewed Ed Gein had his crimes gone undetected during his lifetime and only come to light when his house was cleared after his death...

MARK MURTON.

LORD HORROR #1-3 and MENG & ECKER #1-2 by Dave Britton, Kris Guido and Lash Mishima

Lord Horror, a William Joyce (Lord Hawley) clone, merrily hacks and decapitates his way through New York, Hong Kong and post war England. Meanwhile Mars, Meng and Ecker, Siamese Twins surgically separated at birth by Dr. Mengle, do likewise in

Jolly old present day England.

How to start from the beginning, when handed these magazines to review, I was instantly impressed with the packaging and presentation: card bound glossy colour covers, nice strong printing inside on good stock, giving it a kind of European feel.

In 'LHM' we find our chum hacking his way through New York and a rather patchy script which I took to be a character defining exercise; though it did have some nice pieces of black humour. The art is also a little sketchy to start with but picks up as it goes, and has some very nice characterizations of personalities.

'LUD', both art and story pick up a bit from No 1. The story sees LH in plenty of body hacking action in Hong Kong; the storyline involving him being duped into attacking a Templar's rivals, for which he exacts a bloody revenge. All good fun. The artwork is far more together, very strong and stylised, reminding me in parts of Aubrey Beardsley (could possibly be an influence!).

'LUD', this is what they've been saving for us! This story looks to me like the origin of LH; set in pre-war Britain it has LH as the star of Oswald Mosley's political circus and romantically involved with Jessie Matthews, the brother of James Joyce and hated by Winston Churchill. This, the first part of a longer story, sets out a plot by Winston Churchill to destroy LH both politically and physically whilst also putting a spanner in the works of the growing love between LH and Jessie. A wonderful piece of twisted history that never was. A little lacking with the gore and guts but I get the feeling that it's building up for that in later issues, but still a good start.

Now as for the artwork, this man is a genius, he seems to have been waiting for something like this to let rip on. That beautifully crafted Beardsleyesque style is used to cover the page with startlingly powerful images that demand your attention with their strong linked detail. This man has a great talent and until now I had never heard of him, but I will look out for his work in the future.

These adult comics are not on open sale in shops and some have been seized by the Manchester Police along with the LH novel. Having read them, I cannot see why Big Brother has stuck his nose in here! I've seen more violence in 'Frustr' which is on sale in comic shops, far more sex in 'Fiesta's' comic which is on sale in newsagents and miles ruder language in 'Vix' which is available everywhere! This seems to point towards the boys at Savoy having pissed-off someone really big!

'LH' and 'M&E' can be ordered from: Savoy, 279 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 4EW. B.J.

ELLIOT'S GUIDE TO FILMS ON VIDEO by John Elliot

Boxtree Books, 1990, Paperback - £14.99

Billed as the "first complete guide to films available on video" and listing over 10,000 of them in its near 1000 pages, 'Elliot's Guide...' attempts to cover every film released on video in the UK, including TV movies, "films" comprising several episodes of a TV series (i.e. STAR TREK, DR WHO, etc) as well as films released before the need for certification and so no longer available (THE EXORCIST, THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, etc) - although the better known "video nasties" (I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVE, DRILLER KILLER, SS EXPERIMENT CAMP, etc) are notable by their absence - and as such it is destined to take up residence on the book shelves between 'Halliwell's Film Guide' and Michael Weldon's 'Psychronic Encyclopedia Of Film' of film buffs everywhere.

Each film has the customary brief synopsis and cast and credit listing (and even a fairly pointless attempt to give Academy Awards information - this info is freely available elsewhere and besides as this book is a British guide why not give the harder to come by BAFTA information?), but where the book really scores, and the reason it's almost guaranteed to join those book shelves, is that it also lists video running times and cinema timings if significantly different as well as noting when a film was out for censorship reasons, both on the film's release and at the video stage.

This wealth of information is both fascinating - HELLRAISER cut by 4 seconds, NEAR DARK by 14 and ENTER THE DRAGON by a full 1 minute 45 seconds - and frightening: can the DR WHO video of 'The Talons of Weng-Chiang' really have been cut by 10 seconds after it was originally shown early on Saturday evening without adversely affecting any of us who saw it then (I mean, I haven't killed anyone for weeks)?!! And as the book includes "adult" videos you can see exactly how much was cut from that naff porn film you just had to rent when you first got your VCR!

Naturally there's a down side to all this and that's that Mr. Elliot is clearly no fan of our favourite genre (while being far too reverential to recognised 'classics') and hence a film like the wild and wacky FASTER PUSSTYCAT. KILL! KILL! is dismissed as "Cheap and nasty... a mindless and sick anti-film" (!) and the thoughtful and generally non-exploitive No. 45/ANGEL OF VENGEANCE is labelled "Nasty and exploitive". Still, owners of 'Halliwell' know all about 'serious' critics' views on fantasy films and Mr. Elliot does display occasional lapses into good taste with four star (out of five) ratings for HAROLD & MAUDE, REPULSION and INSIGNIFICANCE.

As you'd expect from any work of this scope there are a number of mistakes, perhaps too many for comfort - I'm pretty sure CANNIBAL APOCALYPSE wasn't a 'PG' certificate (!), HANDBRED isn't based on a book by Thomas Hope, EXORCISM isn't 100 minutes long, THE TERMINATOR isn't 135 minutes long and it wasn't James Cameron's directorial debut (although I don't suppose he'd mind people thinking it was), and nor was the original LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS Jack Nicholson's acting debut - but as with any reference book the solid information far outweighs the mistakes and

makes this an essential purchase for all video owners.

The cover bears the legend 'First Edition' so let's hope for regular updates (dropping the superfluous Oscar info as some films are added and correcting those mistakes) along the lines of Halliwell's bi-yearly editions. And yes, there really are films that have been out by one second - readers of a nervous disposition have been warned!

MARK MURTON.

HAVE YOU ZINE IT

continuation from page eleven

TOXIC HORROR

No 5 - £2.95 - 64 A4 pages.

Videodrome, Goblin, Roger Corman, Tony Fitzpatrick, Cannibal Fries, Linnea Quigley, Psycho Killers from Fact to Film, The Hunting of Horella, Scanners II, Fiction. Michael Benson, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016, USA.

TRASH CITY

No 6 - 60p - 48 A5 pages.

Christopher Lee, Bimbos Behind Bars, Black Sunday, James Lorinz, Reviews, Comics. Jim McLennan, 247 Underhill Road, E Dulwich, London, SE22 0PB.

TRASH COMPACTOR

Vol 2 No 4 - \$3.50 - 40 A4 pages.

The Leather Boys, Elm Street 5, That Tender Touch, Boys In The Band, Some Of My Best Friends Are..., Curse Of The Queerwolf, Flesh, Siege, Angela Clevarella/Hal Kelly/Winston Sin, 253 College Street, Suite #108, Toronto, M5T 1R7, Canada.

UNGAWA!

No 2 - £1.95 - 32 A4 pages.

Monster Magazines, Ed Gein, Reviews, Bette Page, Spanish Horror, Jess Franco. Cathal Tohill & Foss Hagen, PO Box 1764, London, NW6 2EQ.

VIDEO WATCHDOG

No 1 - \$4.50 - 64 A5 pages.

Dangerous Obsession, Venezuelan Videos, Jess Franco, Out & Run, Carnival Of Souls, Hercules And The Captive Women, Batman & Robin. Tim Lucas, PO Box 5283, Cincinnati, Ohio 45205-0283, USA.

WET PAINT

No 28 - \$2.50 - 22 A4 pages.

The Flesh Eaters, Stereo, Crimes Of The Future, Colin Baker, Jonny Quest, Fanzines, Best Of The 80's, Terry Nation, Reviews. Jeff Smith, 2106 Traveldine Drive #182, Mesquite, TX 75150, USA.

The prices given do not include postage, so remember to add some extra cash when ordering from the editors.

If you would like to see your zine (fan or pro) mentioned in future issues of FANTASYNOPSIS then send a copy along to the editorial address - you will be sent a copy of the current FANTASYNOPSIS in exchange.



All in all, these books have gone from strength to strength and I can't wait to see what lays ahead.

'M&E'-2, more a collection of little incidents rather than a full blown story; includes some good humorous parodies of cartoon-does and reality's so called heroes. Nice to see Ken Reid getting a mention, a great artist sadly missed. Anyone who remembers 'Frodo's', the greatest comical horror strip ever, will know how great that loss is. For the most part Lash Mishna does get art honours and is very proficient, but for my taste, he is not in the same class as Kris Guldo.

How to get ahead in the NEW YORK cinema scene

An Interview with JAMES GLICKENHAUS by Paul Higson

There are a lot of film fans with aspirations towards cinema success themselves who reach thirty and then begin to get a little disillusioned with the idea of making it. What they tend not to realise is that the film industry is only youthful on the outside. Sure it is the baby-faced and the beautiful and the young that are pushed out in front of the cameras, but the people behind the camera are rarely younger than thirty and others are forty before they can be trusted with a major studio budget. The Sam Raimi's of the world are rare. It's a superficiality to the general. So those buffs who want to be producers and directors take heart. James Glickenhaus was one of those who had to wait for that magic thirty himself before he could celebrate success with *THE EXTERMINATOR*, a cult movie sleeper, a success worldwide theatrically and on video. The fellow has just had an incredible decade with a series of successful major feature films which he directed himself while his company, since and before its 1987 merger with Shapiro Entertainment, has given up many more entertaining and successful movies. A native New Yorker he was born on July 24th 1950. The following interview takes us into what will no doubt for Glickenhaus be another glorious new decade. It reveals a few new things about Glickenhaus himself, like how because of the self-accepted failure in his first feature to make for himself a good film he is very supportive of fresh talent as he sees it, to the point that he would help finance the first two features of those he saw to have that talent. This interview takes us from *THE SUICIDE CULT* right up to the present and was conducted in January 1990. We hope this decade runs as approvingly as the last.

PAUL HIGSON: I once wrote to a friend in a letter that *SUICIDE CULT* as one of the most confusing films ever made. I don't know what the hell it was about. I do have a paperback book called 'The Astrologer' written by John Cameron. It's obvious by the credits of the 'major' film it was made into as featured beneath the blurb that this was the film we now know as *THE SUICIDE CULT*. Why was this book chosen for translation to the screen?

JAMES GLICKENHAUS: *THE SUICIDE CULT* was based on the book 'The Astrologer' written by John Cameron. John was the father of a woman I was going out with at the time who I later married, Meg Cameron, so that's where I came across the original book and got the rights to 'The Astrologer'. I was about twenty-five or twenty-six at the time so it was quite a while ago when I did 'The Astrologer'... and I really had no idea what I was doing although I did have an ambition to be a film-maker. I made a deal with John for the book, wrote the screenplay and took an inheritance I had at the time and made *THE ASTROLOGER*, and it was a really terrible picture. It was eighty minutes of dialogue and two minutes of inept action, when I was finished with it no one was interested in distributing it theatrically. And that was kind of an interesting time in the United States in the film business in 1977/78 when they still had drive-in theatres and even if a film was terrible you could cut a trailer and show it on Friday night. And the distribution business works so that I spent about

nine months of my life going through Texas, Mississippi, Alabama and the South of the United States distributing *THE ASTROLOGER*. I eventually figured that what we had done wrong with *THE ASTROLOGER* that was incorrect was to have so much dialogue and I should make a film that was pure action and that was the genesis of *THE EXTERMINATOR*.

How did it become *THE SUICIDE CULT* and what became of it that it became so impossible to follow?

The reason it was called *THE SUICIDE CULT* was... a few years later another company, 21st Century, wanted to have a try at making it work. For some reason they thought they could make it work and they were going to distribute it as *THE ASTROLOGER*, but then there was the Jonestown Massacre, so they felt that they could capitalize on that and they called it *THE SUICIDE CULT*. They recut the film a little which made the film even less comprehensible than it originally was. That was the story of *THE ASTROLOGER* or *SUICIDE CULT* which was quite honestly really a student film that I made.

Who originated the idea for *THE EXTERMINATOR*?

I wrote the script of *THE EXTERMINATOR*... the original script had no dialogue at all. I eventually put in about twelve or fifteen lines of dialogue and *THE EXTERMINATOR* came about really because I watched the audience reactions to *THE ASTROLOGER*. I was the person that originated the idea and I wrote the original script and I financed the film both personally with my own money and with my mother's money.

What became of Mark Buntzman after *THE EXTERMINATOR* 2? I can't say that I've been wholly observant but has he worked with you on any film since?

Mark Buntzman was a childhood friend of mine. I gave him the job of being producer although he was not involved in financing the film at all. (Buntzman worked on both *SUICIDE CULT* and *THE EXTERMINATOR* - PH). And when *THE EXTERMINATOR* was finished, I realised it was time that we go different directions but I didn't want to ever have Mark be able to say that I left him in the lurch so I gave him the rights on certain conditions to make a sequel to *THE EXTERMINATOR* if he wanted to. I had no interest in doing that... and Mark and I believe it was, Cannon



Films made *THE EXTERMINATOR 2*. I had nothing to do with it. I did see the film and thought it was really very aesthetically and terrible. But I had personally nothing to do with *EXTERMINATOR 2*.

It made a star of Robert Ginty. Before *THE EXTERMINATOR* was Ginty any sort of name in the States, be it in film or television?

Ginty had previously been a television star in a series called 'The Paper Chase' and a television series called 'Sea Sea Black Sheep'. He was starring in the movie *COMING HOME* with Jane Fonda, Bruce Dern and the guy who was in *MIDNIGHT Cowboy*, Jon Voight. He played Bruce Dern's friend in Vietnam and I really thought he was a good actor. The reason I chose Ginty was because I thought *THE EXTERMINATOR* worked better if the character was more of an all-American every day type of person as opposed to an archetypal Clint Eastwood or Charles Bronson bad guy. I wanted someone who you felt could be hurt and could feel pain and I think he conveyed that. I think that was one of the successes of *THE EXTERMINATOR*.

Though I like *THE EXTERMINATOR*, I am quite fond of CODENAME: THE SOLDIER. Was it designed as the first of a series for Avco Embassy (a la Bond)?

The US title of that film was *THE SOLDIER* and that was a very enjoyable film that I did with Avco Embassy. The reason it was with Avco Embassy was Lenny Shapiro, who was head of acquisitions for Avco, made a deal for the US distribution of *THE EXTERMINATOR* and I met him at that time and we remained friends. When I wrote a new script he was able to arrange the financing through Avco... It wasn't necessarily thought of or designed as a series although we thought that we would make more but after *THE SOLDIER* was finished Norman Lear and Jerry Perenchio bought Avco and changed the company substantially. Lenny left and I ended my involvement with them although they wanted me to make another film for a while, but it never turned into anything.

THE PROTECTOR was seemingly plagued by what I call 'big props'. For instance, in the opening chase sequence we had appearances by The Statue of Liberty and The Golden Gate Bridge. This occurs on this side of the Atlantic too, with Buck's Palace, Tower Bridge, popping up in London set films. I can understand a foreigner doing this but why would a native do something so obvious?

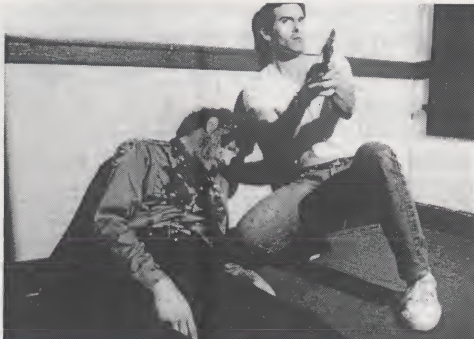
First of all, it was not The Golden Gate Bridge, it was The Brooklyn Bridge I think that you saw. And I think that I slept up the Statue Of Liberty and The Brooklyn Bridge in the film just to show the scope of New York City.

I thought it was patriotic. Do they really believe that it will help appeal to the more patriotic or is it a display of patriotism in the water sometimes? Are you a patriot?

I don't know. You know, I think a lot of people assume you are your films. I really am not my films. I certainly like my films, I make the kind of films I want but what I was in 1982 I'm not sure that I am today. Beyond that I think THE

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SOLDIER was simply an exploration of the damages inherent in transporting nuclear material, plutonium, in such a lax way. The genesis for that idea was a physicist named John McFee and the plutonium truck that the terrorists hi-jack was in fact a visual duplicate of the real truck they drive, except in real life they don't even use guards. But I thought that unless I put guards in the film people would think I was kidding so I put the guards in. **THE SOLDIER** and **THE PROTECTOR**... their characters are heroic but in the sense of **THE SOLDIER**, I don't know that he was exactly patriotic except ultimately patriotic in that he stood up for what he believed in. So I guess that on that basis I try and stand up for what I believe in, so I'm patriotic.

What was it that had you form your own production company?

I formed my own company because I always wanted the freedom to make my films the way I wanted to and the films I really produced myself really were **THE SOLDIER** and **THE EXTERMINATOR**. **THE PROTECTOR**, I was hired to do by Golden Harvest who eventually made a US deal with Warner Bros. They had this enormous South East Asian star, Jackie Chan, who wanted to work with an American director and I really enjoyed making that film. To me **THE PROTECTOR** was really an ode to the Bruce Lee karate film and I found it an enjoyable fun experience. It certainly wasn't more profound than that but a lot of fun to do.

I thought Shapiro Entertainment Corp. was owned by the late Irvin Shapiro but as revealed earlier in this interview it wasn't was it?

No, Shapiro Glickenhau is a combination of Lenney Shapiro and myself. It had nothing to do with Irvin Shapiro whose company was Films Around The World. Of course, I knew Irvin. It's just a coincidence of name. There's no connection at all.

Shapiro Glickenhau have produced a number of genre films amongst them **PHANTOM OF THE RITZ**, **MOONTRAP**, **MANIAC COP** 1 & 2 and the two series from Frank Henenlotter, **BASKET CASE** 2 and **FRANKENHOOKER**.

PHANTOM OF THE RITZ was a film we distributed, we had nothing to do with the production at all. It was a pick-up. **MOONTRAP** we were involved with the production and **MANIAC COP**. **MANIAC COP** 2 we have nothing to do with. Quite honestly making one with Bill Lustig was enough for us. We have no

interest in ever working with him again. So we sold the rights to someone else to make **MANIAC COP** 2.

Henenlotter had seen a film I wrote and directed, **SHAKEDOWN**, which in Europe was called **BLUE JEAN COP**. He came to me and said that he liked it very much and read that I wanted to work with young film-makers, financing and distributing them. He had this script, **THE INSECT CITY**, which I really didn't think was too commercial, nor did I like it very much. The reaction of the company was even more negative than mine. But I did like Frank and I liked his first two films and I wanted to make a film with him so I said, "Look, what else do you have. What else have you thought about?" And he said, "Well, I could do a sequel for **BASKET CASE**." And I said, "I like that idea." And then he gave me a two sentence thumbnail sketch of **FRANKENHOOKER** and I laughed and I liked that and I said, "Okay, we'll do that."

What about the subtly made accusations of **MANIAC COP** being a rip-off of John Goff and Don Edwards **THE NIGHT STALKER**?

I have not seen **THE NIGHT STALKER** so I really couldn't personally answer that question. The original script for **MANIAC COP** was written by Larry Cohen and I thought it was a pretty good script. In terms of whether I borrowed heavily from something else say... I think Francois Truffaut said it the best when he said, "When someone asks me what my films are about I say 'There are only seven plots, so pick one of them, it'll be close.'" We all borrow from everyone. **THE EXTERMINATOR** was certainly not the first film about revenge that had ever been done. A lot of people have said it borrowed very heavily from **DEATH WISH**. I actually had not seen **DEATH WISH** when I wrote **THE EXTERMINATOR** and then, in purpose, avoided it for a number of years so I can honestly say that I haven't seen it. I think we all work on ideas that come from newspapers or real life and there's a commonality of experience and I think that's why a lot of films are the same. That's not to say that **MANIAC COP** was the

BASKET CASE 2

most original thing ever thought of. It certainly wasn't.

You have a couple of interesting reactions to some of these films. Two in particular. First of all **MANIAC COP** was the subject of a film course at the Southern Illinois University, wasn't it?

I have no idea about that but stranger things have happened.

And **MOONTRAP** was the winner of the Award of Special Merit in Sci-Fi Fantasy 1989 at the Houston Film Festival. I am not entirely familiar with this festival so how important is this award?

It certainly was an important award. I think that **MOONTRAP** was interesting as a low budget science fiction film. I think traditionally made SF films cost tens of millions of dollars and this whole film cost about a million and a half dollars so I think that it was pretty impressive.

I am not too impressed with the film itself. I thought the acting, direction and dialogue bad and the special effects varied in quality, the actual concept did excite me as one of the most original in years in the SF arena.

I don't terribly disagree with you. I don't think the acting, the direction, the dialogue were the most exciting thing ever done. But I think that Robert Dyke is a talented person. I think he learned from the first film and I'm actually considering doing a sequel to the film with him. Try and get a little better script... and I think we have a good idea. We have a script he came up with called **THE PYRAMIDS OF MARS** so I may be working with him again, but we'll just have to see how things go.

SGE have just begun a video label in the United Kingdom. Will all the new SGE releases be brought out on this label?

Then SGE label in the United Kingdom will not be handling all of our releases. We really decided on a picture by picture basis. For example **BASKET CASE** 2 and **FRANKENHOOKER** will be distributed by Medusa in the UK and my last film, **SHAKEDOWN/BLUE JEAN COP**, was distributed by BraveWorld. It's who's interested and who'll pay the price were looking for and who really has a feeling for the film.

What was wrong with **INSECT CITY**? Was the budget too high? Were two films better felt of it or were two films always part of the deal?

It had nothing to do with budget. I just didn't think the script was something that appealed to me.

Obviously creative control was important to Henenlotter on these and, indeed, may of his films, and is another factor to his agreeing to this contract.

In terms of creative control I think, listen, with Henenlotter if you're going to hire someone and you believe that they have talent then you





certainly want to give them the freedom to have their talent be realised, but I think also that you have to exercise a gentle form of control and help them. Ultimately, we had some of the final say in things like final cut, cast and crew, but we exercised that very gently. I was happy with Frank and I think we had a very good working relationship.

Were you, to Frank Henenlotter, the perfect executive producer?

I'd like to think I was but I think you should ask Frank that question. He might feel differently but I think he had a good time and we were on very friendly terms for sure.

Henenlotter has a reputation for awkwardness.

No, I didn't have any feeling of that at all nor any trouble with him. I found him extremely professional, bright, energetic and when we had to make some changes he was all for it in a positive way.

The stills supplied show a great deal of promise for the two films. How do you personally rate them in comparison to his first two features?

In terms of the stills I agree with you. I think that these films show great potential. *FRANKENHOOKER*, I think, is an extraordinarily funny film and *BASKET CASE 2* really does take the Journey of Bell and Duane to a new level and I think they are leaps and bounds over his earlier work. I think they are really going to do well, so I am very excited about them.

What was the budget on these films?

The budget on these films was approximately \$1.75 million or \$2 million depending on what factors you would take into consideration. But there was a good \$2 million each.

What might the budget on *INSECT CITY* have been? I'm an eco-horror film fan, okay.

I have no idea what it would have cost or if it will ever get made. We are not going to do *INSECT CITY* as I said, but we are going to do two more films with Frank. We are going to do *BASKET CASE 3* and we're going to do another horror comedy that I'm not sure of the title yet, but we'll be announcing those films at the American Film Market in the United States in February.

There's a dilemma concerning copyright in the new year. Scholars are puzzling as to the correct Roman Numerisation, whether it will be *MOO*, *MOOM*, *MOODOO* or whatever. What will Shapiro Glickhaus be using?

I personally don't mind *MOO*, but I think that the copyright we put on 1990 was the Arabic 1990.

What else can we expect from Shapiro Glickhaus?

We're going to do two more Henenlotter films next year. We also have, in the final process of developing, a script with Ray Pyun, *AM EYERING IN PARIS*. It's based on a best generation novel by Diane De Pries called 'No Remorse For A Beatnik'. It was adapted from that book by John Byron who was the writer/director of *TRUCKS* and the Bill Murray film... It was shot in India (Getting out through to the other office) What was that Bill Murray film called?... *Kirsten*... *Priest*... What was that Bill Murray film called?... You know... Byron's film?

PRIS: THE RAZOR'S EDGE.

RAZOR'S EDGE. I'm sorry. You see I've reached the age of 39 and I'm becoming somewhat senile. Ah, yes. So we have *AM EYERING IN PARIS* and, as I said earlier, we are probably going to do a sequel to *MOONTRAP*, *MOONTRAP 2: THE PYRAMIDS FROM MARS*. I have a very large science-fiction budget film that I've written called *ROOM AT THE*

END OF THE UNIVERSE that we will be making at some time. I don't know that we can get it off the ground in 1990 because the budget is so high that it might clot the various other activities of the company so there's another action-adventure script in the 10 to 12 million dollar range I'm finishing up and it's likely I will do that one before we do *ROOM AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE*.

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"She's filled with secrets"

Welcome to Twin Peaks, population 51,201, and every one of them with something to hide.

A TV classic that hasn't even been shown on U.K. TV yet? (This article was written in July 1990 - Ed.) Absolutely; broadcast to great acclaim in the U.S.A. and already available on video in Britain for those who can't wait for the autumn BBC showing, **TWIN PEAKS** is destined to take its place in the annals of ground-breaking, trend-setting television. So let's rock!

Director David Lynch and co-writer/producer Mark Frost (a former story editor on another classic TV series, *"Hill Street Blues"*), encouraged by their mutual agent Tony Krantz, first approached ABC Television with the idea in 1988 at the time of the Writers Guild Strike and got the go ahead for the series, first announced as *"Northwest Passage"*, almost immediately. Filmed entirely on location in Snoqualmie in Washington State, shooting began in March 1989.

This decision to let David Lynch loose on an unsuspecting prime-time television audience can be viewed as very brave or very foolish and one that could easily have backfired: would Lynch be able to operate within the confines of a TV budget and censorship restrictions - his cinema probing into smalltown Americana, **BLUE VELVET**, remains unseen on national U.S.A. television despite the preparation of a "special" version redubbing 58 lines of dialogue and cutting 52 seconds of nudity as even this print is considered too strong by the networks - and, equally, would a mass TV audience, numbed by a steady diet of lame soaps, silly sit-coms and brainless quiz shows, respond to Lynch's own peculiar brand of iconoclasm in sufficient numbers to justify ABC's considerable investment (a mere cult following wouldn't attract advertisers)?

The budget wasn't really a problem as Lynch was allowed \$1.0m for the two-hour pilot, while the stricter censorship simply meant that he had to employ subtler but equally subversive ways of exposing and exploring the dark underbelly of U.S.A. smalltown life.

So right from the Freudian title Lynch presents a world that has been knocked just enough off centre to appear normal to the casual observer, but the deeper we delve the stranger things become.

Peopled by as bizarre a cast as ever infiltrated the safe world of television - a sheriff called Harry S. Truman, his kooky secretary, Lucy, and her ultra-sensitive cop hubby, Andy, who weeps at crime scenes, a senile mayor, the 'log lady' (a woman who carries a log around, of course), Heidi, a waitress with a laugh like a chirping bird, a spaced out hippy psychiatrist with at least as many problems as any of his patients, a witch of a woman with an eye-patch, and a mix of teens from the Lolita at the lodge to all-American high school girls and sociopathic teenage boys - **TWIN PEAKS** challenges the expectations and illusions of the soap-opera genre from the very start.

The setting of **TWIN PEAKS** continues the tree motif (first seen in **BLUE VELVET**, where the story was set in the mythical Lambert (Lumber-town) and starts when Jeffrey, the lead character,

finds a severed ear as he walks through a wood, and here the town of Twin Peaks nestles among the majestic Douglas fir near the north-west border, with the local saw mill playing an important part in the action - Sheriff's father was a scientist who specialised in disease of trees so perhaps this explains the use of this metaphor to show the disease at the heart of a small town. Twin Peaks, like *Lambert*, has that timeless feel for each of the film and we could easily be back in Lynch's beloved 1950's, until reminders of the modern world rear their head to bring us back to the present with a jolt.

So much for the setting, what of the story? Well, briefly, if that's possible, it goes something like this: the story opens with the discovery of the body of 17-year-old homecoming queen Laura Palmer, naked and wrapped in plastic, washed up on the shore (when shown in America, Lynch cut straight to the first advert break just as the dead girl's blue-lipped face fills the frame). Sheriff Truman is alerted and as he and his men probe into Laura's last moments in their search for clues, uncovering a previously unknown darker side to her involving drugs, large sums of money and a contact magazine called *"Flesh World"*, so the story explores the lives and relationships of the townfolk. It soon becomes clear that Laura has been cheating on her boyfriend Bobby (the least stable of the sociopathic teens), who in turn has been cheating on her with Shelley, who is married to a British trucker, from the diner. Shelley's co-worker, Norma, whose husband is currently in jail, is having an affair with a married man, Ed from 'Big Ed's Gas Farm', (it's his wife who has the eye-patch), and even the sheriff is involved in a clandestine nocturnal liaison. Big Ed's nephew, Jim, a biker who filmed Laura and best friend Donna coveting on coke in the local hills shortly before she died, soon becomes a prime suspect, but sure of his innocence, Donna, against the wishes of her boyfriend Mike, sets about warning Jim of his impending arrest. Mike, Bobby's best friend, is equally sure that Jim is guilty and the pair set off to get him before the police do... Meanwhile there is a power struggle at the local saw mill between the female Chinese owner who inherited it from her recently deceased husband, and her sister-in-law who feels she should have been left the mill. But the mill is in financial trouble and a consortium of Norwegians, fronted by local businessmen including Laura's father, are trying to buy them out cheap - "We're going to be able to get it for a song; one verse, no chorus" - to use the land to build the 'Ghostwood Country Club and Estates'; that's if the local Lolita, Audrey, doesn't put a spanner in the works... And then another (near) victim of the killer comes crawling down the railway tracks, and into their elders comes FBI man Dale Cooper, mis-quoting V C Fields and spouting one memorable line after another. Even by the eccentric standards of the rest of the cast Cooper is decidedly odd and so out of place that he could almost have come from another planet (or at least "another place") - the character, says Frost, was based on Lynch for his "quirkiness and attention to detail". Cooper teams up with the easy going Truman who watches in fascination as the compulsive FBI man meticulously dictates every detail of the case into his mini tape recorder to the unseen Diane,

seemingly unmoved by each shocking new discovery while at the same time taking an almost childlike curiosity and delight in the local wildlife, especially the smell of the Douglas firs. Cooper's first move is to examine the finger nails of the victim; Truman is sceptical at first, but then, digging deep under one of Laura's nails, Cooper retrieves a small square of paper with a single letter printed on it - a typically surreal Lynch scene with flickering fluorescent overhead lights and an unflinching camera holding close on Cooper's probing as he digs deep to reach the paper. Another vital discovery is made when they examine the video of Laura and Donna (which I won't spoil for those who haven't seen it), and so the clues start to pile up...

In the TV series - initially seven episodes with budgets of \$1.1m and a different director for each, including Duwayne Dunham, Tim Hunter and Mark Frost's directing debut, with Lynch returning for the last of the season - the murder remains unsolved, hoping to get viewers hooked on this storyline so they keep tuning in as others are developed, but in the European video release we are presented with a killer so that it stands as a film in its own right. This works extremely well (ie. you can't see the [kill]), to provide a very satisfactory conclusion; and it's all topped off by a quite extraordinary code that has to be seen to be disbelieved! Set "25 years later" it features an ageing Cooper meeting "the man from another place" along with a familiar face in an incredible scene that largely defies description and one that words really couldn't do justice to - apparently this scene appears later in the series as a dress sequence but this will almost certainly rob it of much of the ambiguous and disorientating air it has here.

Other remarkable scenes include the aforementioned ones at the mortuary and with the video, as well as: Laura's mother breaking down as she realises that she has lost her daughter (superbly acted, it's a difficult scene to watch due to the raw emotion exposed here and it must have been doubly so for viewers used only to the shag sentiments of other soaps); the scene at the school where the realisation that Laura is dead spreads among her classmates without a word being spoken; the discovery of the scene of the killer's attacks; angel voiced Julie Cruise performing (another) hauntingly beautiful song as a fight breaks out in the roadhouse all around her; Laura's mother reliving her desperate search of the house for her daughter until she suddenly remembers "seeing" the killer (a genuinely spine-



tingling moment); and the teenage moles in the jail howling into the night. There are also the usual touches of off-beat Lynch humour, such as Lucy playing with her bat and ball on elastic while her husband plays the trumpet with one trouser-leg rolled up as they "get ready for bed". Pete, who at the saw mill checking his inventory of stocks as he reads off "two by fours, four by eights" is a strangely poetic song-singer fashion, and easy Audrey's interaction with the Norwegian (they never had a chance!).

Equally original and enjoyable is the dialogue, providing many great lines - where else would the question "Do you think they saw us?" get the response "Give me a doughnut?" - including my favourite: "Diane, I'm holding in my hand a small box of chocolate bunnies".

Joining Lynch and Frost in this assault on the sensibilities of the unsuspecting TV viewer are director of photography Ron Garcia, who manages to give the piece a distinctive look almost unseen on television, from the golden sunlight of the early scenes to the dark moody interiors of the killer's lair; Angelo Badalamenti, here contributing a score that is even better than the one he composed for BLUE VELVET, always memorable if effortlessly changes style to perfectly complement the mood of each scene and it really does deserve a soundtrack album release (until then, the two songs performed by Julie Cruise in the film, 'Falling' and 'Nightingale', with music by Badalamenti) and words by David Lynch, are available on Julie Cruise's magnificent debut album 'Floating Into The Night', along with eight other Lynch/Badalamenti compositions; along with a cast that presents a pleasing blend of reliable old hands (Peggy Lipton, Piper Laurie), current stars (Kyle MacLachlan, Joan Chen), Lynch peripherals (Kyle MacLachlan again), Jack Nance), and an interesting young cast with plenty of future stars among their ranks. Froe such a uniformly fine cast it's wrong to single anyone out, but I'm going to anyway, and that's the actress who plays Lucy, the acolyte secretary, a character who could easily have been stupid and annoying but instead is favourably and endearing and becomes a cult favourite as the series progresses - I can't actually give the name of the actress who plays Lucy as the credits only give the names of the leading players without telling us who plays whom (possibly the only fault with the film) But no doubt we'll soon acclimatise ourselves with all their names once the series airs here.

After several delays TWIN PEAKS finally aired in America in May 1990, and along with some ecstatic reviews (see quotes) It also picked up an incredible 35 million viewers - despite the fact that it was put on in direct opposition to the top rated 'Cheers' - giving it the highest rating of the spring season and one of the highest ever for a TV series. Although the series itself never achieved these spectacular ratings the response has been sufficiently good for ABC to commission another series for the winter.

TWIN PEAKS isn't the first great USA made for TV movie (remember THE NIGHT STALKER, A WHALE FOR THE KILLING and SPECIAL BULLETIN (yeah, I do, but what about SALEM'S LOT and DUEL, etc... Ed.)), but it is the best and sets a standard that will be hard to follow; one thing's for sure, prime time USA television can only benefit from trying to emulate it.

I hope it's not being overly optimistic thinking that TWIN PEAKS can change the face of television - after all, the MTV classics ('Lou Grant', 'Hill Street Blues' and 'St. Elsewhere') came and went and two years on from another avaricious film directors TV debut, Robert Altman's superb 'Tanner '88', that series still stands like an oasis among the desert wilderness of USA television drama with no one willing or able to take up the challenge thrown down by this work - but as announced then 'Dallas' is seen to have run its course and will cease production has to be a good sign and one that a real change is on the way.

Meanwhile let's just sit back and enjoy another genuine TV classic.

In conclusion, TWIN PEAKS is ultimately a film to be seen and experienced, not written about (so why did I do - Assistant Ed.); so what are we waiting for? Get down to your local video store and beg, borrow or steal a copy (or even try and win one in our competition - Ed.).

MARK MURTON.

CAST & CREDITS

Kyle MacLachlan (Dale Cooper), Michael Ontkean (Sheriff Harry Truman), Mädchen Amick (??), Dana Ashbrook (Bobby Briggs), Richard Beymer (??), Lare Flynn Boye (Donna Hayward), Sharlyn Fenn (Audrey), Warren Frost (??), Peggy Lipton (Norma), James Marshall (James Hurley), Everett McGill (??), Jack Nance (Pete Martell), Ray Winstone (??), Joan Chen (Joelynn Peckard), Piper Laurie (Katherine Martell), Russ Tamblyn (Dr Laurence Jacob), Eric De Ru (??), Mary Jo Deschanel (??), Harry Goss (??), Gary Hershberger (Mike Nelson), Michael Horse (??), Grace Zabriskie (??), Troy Evans (George Wolchek), John Boylan (Dwayne Milford), Rodney Harvey (Biker Scooby), Cheryl Lee (Laura), Robert Davenport (Johnny Horne), Jan D'Arcy (Sylvia Horne), Kimsy Robertson (Lucy Morgan), Jessica Walters (Harriet Hayward), Wendy Robie (Nedra Hurley), Don Davis (Major Briggs), Charlotte Stewart (Betty Briggs), Phoebe Augustine (Nonnette Pulaski), Brett Vester (Joey), Frank Silva (Bob), Michael J. Anderson (Man From Another Place), David Verman (Giles Smith), Jane Jones (Margaret Honeycutt), Tawnya Pettiford-Walton (Dr. Shelby), Shelley Henning (Alice Brady), Dorothy Roberts (Mrs Jackson), Julie Cruise (Grl Singer), Anna Stenesh (Sven Jorgenson), Andrea Hayes (Heldi), Rick Tuck (Barek Pulaski), Marjorie Nelson (Janice Hogan), Ben DiGregorio (Max Hartman), Diane Caldwell (Hotel Employee), Catherine Coulson (Log Lady), Al Strobel (One Armed Man).

Directed by David Lynch; Produced by David J. Latt; Written by Mark Frost & David Lynch; Music Composed and Conducted by Angelo Badalamenti; Edited by Duwayne R Dunham; Director of Photography - Ron Garcia; Production Designer - Patricia Morris; Executive Producers - Mark Frost, David Lynch; Associate Producer - Monty Montgomery; Casting - Johanna Ray; Unit Production Manager - Eugene Mazzoli; 1st Assistant Director - Margaux Mackey; 2nd Assistant Director - Carol L Vitkay; Camera Operator - Sean Doyle; First Assistant Camera - Thomas Kilness; Orchestrations - Angelo Badalamenti; Set Decorator - Leslie Morales; On Set Dresser - Frank Silva; Construction Co-ordinator - Charles Armstrong; Property Master/Special Effects - Greg McKelvie; scenic Artist - Gretchen Armstrong; Costume Designer - Patricia Morris; Vardrobe Supervisor - Ron Leeson; Key Costumer - Earl Lewis; Make-up Supervisor - Elizabeth Williamson; Hair Stylist - Wayne Coker; 3rd Assistant Director - Lynn Wegmans; Sound Mixer - James Pilchard; Boom - Robert Harris; Sound Effects Recorder - John Venturthy; Gaffer - James Blair; Key Grip - Mark Davis; Settle Casting - Susan Dixon; Extra Casting - White Light Casting Inc; Script Supervisor - Sharon West; Location Manager - Julie Davis; Transportation Co-ordinator - John 'Jed' Yarkough; Production Supervisor - Deborah LaFaire; Production Accountant - Novell B Grossman; Stunt Co-ordinator - David Boushey; Biker Co-ordinator - Jeff Ferrell; Production Co-ordinator - Denyse Hurley; Los Angeles Co-ordinator - Joseph Montrome; Assistant To David Lynch - Debby Trutnick; Assistant To Mark Frost - Paula K Shlensau; Technical Consultant - Richard B Whitaker; Associate Editor - Jay Ignaszewski; Assistant Editors - Brian Berden, Michael Altman; Apprentice Editor - Tara Bera; Post Production Supervisor - Ute Leonhardt; Sound Design - Douglas Murray; Music Editor - David Slusser; Re-Recording Mixers - Mark Berger, David Parker; 'The Nightingale' - Lyric by David Lynch, Music by Angelo Badalamenti; 'Falling' - Lyric by David Lynch, Music by Angelo Badalamenti; 'The

Nightingale' & 'Falling' Performed by Julie Cruise, courtesy of Warner Bros Records Inc, by Arrangement with Warner Special Products; Titles & Opticals by Pacific Title; Title Design by Awest; Colour by CFI; Sound Edited & Stereo Mix - Saul Zaentz Film Centre; Filmed with Panavision Cameras & Lenses. Lynch/Frost Productions In Association with Propaganda Films. 1989. Running Time: 115 mins. WORLDVISION ENTERPRISES INC. WARNER HOME VIDEO.

What the press said:

"The show that will change television" - CONNISEUR

"TWIN PEAKS... like nothing else on television" - L.A. TIMES

"Intelligent, gorgeously filmed and highly stylish. TV has never seen a town like Twin Peaks" - NEWSDAY

"TWIN PEAKS extends the boundaries of network television" - GO MAGAZINE

"TWIN PEAKS is one of the most intoxicating combinations of grimmess and giggles ever made for television, or for anything else" - THE WASHINGTON POST

COMPETITION

Here's your chance to own a copy of the TWIN PEAKS video (VHS) in a competition courtesy of Warner Home Video and Mathias Thomas Ltd.

1. How many Emmy nominations did TWIN PEAKS receive?
2. David Lynch and Mark Frost previously collaborated on an as yet unfilmed comedy script, what is it called?
3. Lynch regulates Jack Nance and Kyle MacLachlan both appear in TWIN PEAKS, but which was the first Lynch film they both appeared in?

Send your answers to the editorial address (don't forget to include your own name and address) and ask your envelope "TWIN PEAKS COMP". The first three correct answers drawn after the closing date will win.

CLOSING DATE : 31/9/91

The 1990 SF, Fantasy & Horror Film Convention

Manchester's Society of Fantastic Films have organised a whole weekend of fun especially for lovers of our genre. The festival will run from Friday 12th October 1990 to Sunday 14th October 1990 at Parkers Hotel in Manchester.

Events scheduled include screenings of four brand new movies, classic movies from six decades, a 3D showing of REVENGE OF THE CREATURE, an amateur SF film competition final, film fair & a personal guest appearance by Ray Harryhausen.

If this sounds like your ideal weekend then contact The Society of Fantastic Films, 95 Meadowgate Road, Salford, Manchester, M6 8EN. Ticket prices are £20.00 for members and £25.00 for supporting membership. FANTASTICFILMS wishes the organisers every success in their venture.

FANTASYWORD COMPETITION

WIN A VHS COPY OF

SOCIETY

FANTASYWORD in conjunction with MEDUSA present a fantasy X-Word competition.

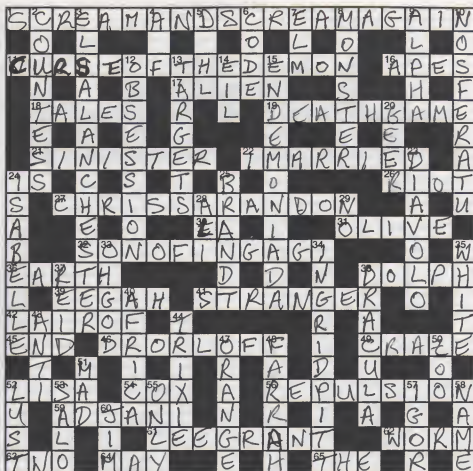
The first three correct entries drawn from our coudron after the closing date will win a VHS video of Brian Yuzna's weird and wonderful SOCIETY.

If you do not wish to damage your copy of FANTASYWORD then please feel free to copy or photo-copy the page.

Send your completed entry to the editorial address (don't forget to enclose your name and address) and mark your envelope "SOCIETY COMP". The competition is not open to FANTASYWORD contributors and employees of MEDUSA.

CLUES ACROSS

1. The first film to bring together horror icons Cushing, Lee and Price (6,3,6,5)
11. USA title for 50's classic based on the short story 'Casting The Runes' (5,2,3,5)
16. They had a bloody night in 1968 (4)
17. The nation where James Cagney met Mandy Patinkin (5)
18. E.C. stories from the crypt (5)
19. Film in which Sondra Locke and Coleen Camp sexually humiliate Seymour Cassell (5,4)
21. The sort of urge Edward D Wood Jr had in 1959 (8)
22. What Gloria Talbot says she did to a monster from outer space (1,7)
24. 'A STRANGER ** WATCHING YOU' (2)
26. Producer William Castle's follow up film to 'ROSEMARY'S BABY' with a script by Barbara Steele's ex-husband (4)
27. 'FRIGHT NIGHT''s lead vampire (5,8)
30. (+15 Down). Original title of Spanish 'EXORCIST' rip-off (2,11)
31. Shelley Duvall seemed born to play this olly character (5)
32. GINO IS NO FAG (Anagram of 1940's film title) (3,2,6)
36. Julian says Goona and the girls are easy (5)
38. Christian name of muscle-bound actor who punishes the universe (5)
39. Crazy cyseman movie with Richard 'Jaws' Kiel in the title role (5)
41. Barbara Eden had one within in 1974 (8)
- 42 (+65 Across +35 Down +62 Across), MORAL FITE WITH WHORE (Anagram of 1980's film title) (4,2,3,5,4)
45. Finish at the start of Alan Rudolph's angered species (3)
46. He was awful in 1962 and sinister 20 years later (2,6)
49. Film dealing with Jack Palance's mania for an Infernal Idol (5)
- 52 (+14 Down +23 Down). Original title of Mario Bava film originally released in 1972 before being re-cut and re-released in the guise of 'THE EXORCIST' (4,1,2,7)
54. Surname of young Dr Watson (3)
56. 60's classic filmed in London with a French star by an East European director (9)
59. See 24 Down



61. Actress who played Denzel's aunt (3,5)
62. See 42 Across
63. Wolf On a gullotine! (3)
64. Nathilda might have regretted appearing in Tobe Hooper's 'LIFEFORCE' (3)
65. See 42 Across

CLUES DOWN

- 2 (+38 Down). Just one of several films based on the legend of Elizabeth Bathory (8,7)
3. Boris Karloff on screen bride and Charles Laughton's off (4,10)
4. Not many laffs in this US TV 'ET' rip-off (1,1,1)
5. Tessa, Patricia Neal's daughter in 'HAPPY MOTHERS DAY...LOVE GEORGE' and in real life (4)
- 6 (+58 Down +44 Down). Crazy alternate title for 1970's Romero film (4,4,6)
7. The street of Freddy's nightmares (3)
8. The 1980 club overseen by Vincent Price (7)
9. The incident that occurred when a deadly micro-organism was brought from Mars to Earth on a space probe (5)
10. The vampire played by Klaus Kinski (9)
12. Film continuing De Palma's persistent preoccupation with Hitchcock (9)
13. Rats get mixed up in a Karloff film title (7)
14. See 52 Across
15. See 30 Across
20. Will the male lead of 'DEAR DEAD DELILAH' please stand up (4)
23. See 52 Across
- 24 (+59 Across). French beauty whose fantasy connections include going underground for Luc Besson in 1985 (8,6)
25. Surname of actress featured in several Ray Dennis Steckler films (6)
28. First name of character whose son was played by Tony Curtis in a 1952 film (3)
29. Did Kathleen Bell have any place to hide in this 1981 TV movie? (2)
33. What you're likely to exclaim when you discover this film features George Burns as a heavenly being along with John Denver (2,3)
34. Multi-lingual Polish actress/writer with a cult following from her horror appearances which started in the 1964 Spanish production 'THE PREHISTORIC SOUND' (6,4)
35. See 42 Across
37. Surname of actor who played the murderous genie in 1979's 'ARABIAN ADVENTURE' (4)
38. See 2 Down
40. Abbott and Costello went here looking for laughs but ended up with screams (6)
43. Was Denham for or against Christ? (4)
44. See 6 Down
47. Kubrick's clockwork citrus (6)
48. Former angel who was lusted after by Hector and Harvey in 1980 (6)
50. The sort of ship helmed by Richard Storr in 1985 (3)
51. Mal's Max (3)
52. What we all did for a vampire like Yvette Stensgaard (4)
53. Also 'THE 120 DAYS OF SODOM' (4)
55. The man who wanted to live forever found that the way out is dead (4)
57. He was on the loose with the lunatics in 1985 (4)
58. See 6 Down
60. Jungle character first played by Johnny Weissmuller in 1948 (3)

Compiled by Mark Hutton.

CLOSING DATE : 31/1/91

"It's all about fitting in"

ED TO ED

Scriptwriter and Novelist ED NAHA in conversation
with Fantasynopsis Editor Paul J Brown

The name Ed Naha is probably one that you have heard of or read about but you can't quite place him. He is of course an extremely prolific writer who weaves in and out of different forms of print with relative ease but is generally best known for his contributions to the fantasy side of things.

He started out by working as a columnist for the 'New York Post' and has written for many different publications such as, 'Science Digest', 'Oui!', 'Playboy', 'The Twilight Zone', 'Heavy Metal' and 'Starlog'. He was also the co-editor of 'Future Life' and even edited the very first issue of 'Fangoria'.

His name appears on about twenty screenplays (six of which have been filmed) and he is best remembered for TROLL, DOLLS and the mega-buck success, HOMEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS.

All of this would be more than enough work for most writers but this is not the case with Ed as he has also written about twenty-three novels (including 'The Paradise Plot', 'Breakdown', 'Orphans', 'The Suicide Plague', six 'Marauders' tales under the pen name of Michael McGann and six 'Traveller' tales as D B Drome), adapted numerous film novelizations (including RODDOOP, RODDOOP 2 and GHOSTBUSTERS II) and has penned several non-fiction genre books ('Horrors: From Screen to Screen', 'The Science Fictionary', 'Brilliance On A Budget: The Films of Roger Corman', 'The Making Of Dune' and 'Aliens').

As well as being talented and amazingly busy he was friendly and amiable enough to agree to this interview which took place in February 1990.

Paul J Brown: When did the fantasy bug first bite you?

Ed Naha: Growing up in the late 1950's, fantasy was always a part of my life. Networks, in dire need of programming, tossed on as many cartoon and puppet shows as possible, which impressed the hell out of me (much more so than strained beets). When I was four, my dad took us to see 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA. I was impressed by two things: the enormous scope of the movie and my father's complaints that the theatre seats destroyed his butt. By the late 1950's and early 1960's, horror films were tossed onto TV regularly. I became an addict. About the same time, I started buying 'Famous Monsters Of Filmland'. I decided, when I grew up, that I'd either have my own monster magazine or make movies. I don't have my own monster magazine, yet, and some critics would argue that I've ever made a movie.

What was your first piece of published work?

I started writing when I was in college, doing humour pieces and movie reviews for the college paper. My first paid published work was in 'Rolling Stone' in 1970. They ran some sort of bone-headed essay contest and the winning essay was so lame, I wrote a letter parodying it. They liked it so much, they published it and I was paid the princely sum of \$35. I started doing a lot of rock journalism after that. In fact, I was still doing rock reviews for 'The New York Post' until 1982. I guess I had the hair for it.

How did your writing of scripts first come about?

Scriptwriting came about totally by accident. I

was bored in my last job in New York and, while walking the three miles to and from work, I'd think up funny sight-gags. After two years, I put them in a script and sold them to some poverty row outfit in New Jersey (not exactly a hotbed of film production). The money paid for my furniture to be shipped to Los Angeles.

In '82 I moved out to LaLaLand. I walked into Roger Corman's office (I'd written a book on Roger previously) and said something cunning, like: "I wanna write a script." Roger was equally caggy. "Okay," he said. And that was that.

Why did you only edit one (the first) issue of 'Fangoria' and why under a pseudonym?

'Fangoria' came about totally by accident. I was working at 'Starlog' as a staff writer (with thirteen pseudonyms in a dire effort to make it

seem that we had dozens of people contributing) and co-editing 'Future Life' magazine for the same outfit. They wanted to launch a one-shot horror film magazine and put me in charge. The first issue was strictly seat-of-the-pants time, digging up facts on old movies, behind the scenes stuff on new flicks and assembling photos. We had, I think, three people working on it. I wound up re-writing most of the articles. GODZILLA was our first coverboy (coverthing?). I envisioned 'Fangoria' as a more 'Famous Monsters' effort.

When the response to the first issue proved positive, the magazine was given a full-time editor and the slant changed to feature more gore au gogo articles.

What was Roger Corman like to work for?



Working for Roger Cowman was an amazing experience. It was great preparation for working at the big Hollywood studios. With Roger, anything that could go wrong did go wrong... twice the first day and about six times every day following. It was a really goofy time.

Roger, who is a great human being with a really offbeat sense of humour, would pay meticulous care to a script while it was in development. Then, he would hand the script to the film-makers who, apparently, had just been released from psycho wards.

Two months later, the first cut would be assembled and everyone would stumble away, in shock. Then, the movie would be fixed, as much as possible in editing with the writer coming up with as many "loop lines" (overdub bits of dialogue) as possible in a frantic attempt to re-insert some idea of a plot. It was movie-making in the trenches.

Roger and I had known each other for a few years, through my book on his films and various magazine and newspaper interviews, so it wasn't as if we hated each other for what was going on. In fact, we both reacted in the same goofy way. I could walk into his office and say things like "this is insane." He'd nod, laugh, shrug his shoulders and say something along the lines of "Yes, it is. What can I do?" All in all, it was a lot of fun working with him. Sort of like participating in a TWILIGHT ZONE episode.

The effects of working on a disaster like WIZARDS OF THE LOST KINGDOM do not seem to have affected my career, do you think it was a good base from which to launch?

Jeez, WIZARDS OF THE LOST KINGDOM was such a joke, after a while, you forgot how angry you should have been. You'd just walk around with this glazed look and have people keep you away from sharp objects. It turned out to be good training, a though, it didn't help my career, but it didn't hurt it either. I wound up using a pseudonym. Tom Edwards, I think.

How did you get involved with Empire Pictures and Albert and Charles Band?

Empire Pictures was really a lot of fun to work for. I met some of the nicest people in the world up there. Again, I stumbled into Empire totally by accident. I interviewed Albert Band for "The New York Post" about some wind-sucking kung-fu film he was doing. Afterwards, I sent him a copy of the script that mutated into WIZARDS OF THE LOST KINGDOM. He liked it. Called me a few months later about writing TROLL.

I met with Albert, Charles Band and Dahl Dion initially. Later, with John Beuchler. (At this point in my career, I still didn't have an agent.) I landed in a script that everyone was high on. It took a year to finance the film. By the time the cameras rolled, our young star had grown about eight inches. Ego! It was a lot of fun working at Empire. Charlie Band is a walking exclamation point. He has all the enthusiasm of a young Walt Disney. He's a dreamer. The only problem at Empire was the fact that Charlie's dreams often exceeded his cash flow. I wound up writing about five scripts for them, including DOLLS.

TROLL could have been so good, and apart from the little fella needing a paper hankie, what went wrong?

TROLL disappointed just about everyone who had been with the flick since it's origins. Everything about the movie was over-the-top and shouldn't have been. I think the key to a good fantasy is to step it in reality and, then, go wild. There was also a big problem with the pacing. There were more pregnant pauses in that movie than are found in most leanse classes.

John Beuchler seemed to start off a trend by switching roles from effects man to director, how



happy were you with his treatment of TROLL?

I wasn't really happy with the finished film. It struck me as being slower than molasses. About twenty of us went to see it on opening night. I was in shock after five minutes. Fortunately, a friend of mine smuggled in a bottle of tequila in her purse. I downed it. By the end of the movie, I was too busy trying to find the restroom to worry about the film.

The movie got the kind of reviews usually reserved for communicable diseases.

Your next picture, DOLLS, turned out to be a little gem of a film full of atmosphere, what do you think made it work so well?

DOLLS, on the other hand, was a wonderful experience. Director Stuart Gordon, producer Brian Yuzna and I saw a chance to make a really strange, contemporary fairy tale: a horror movie that actually had heart. We were totally in synch on this one from the outset. When Stuart was forced to change a scene or two, he actually called me up and asked me to write new dialogue to make the new scenes work. Bless him.

The movie received pretty good reviews out here (better on the West Coast than in the East). I think the movie clicked because, basically, it was a story about kids and their parents. There's a line in the movie "Being a parent isn't a right, it's a privilege." That about sums up the movie. Children are very special beings. Too many of us forget how special.

In your opinion how good a director is Stuart Gordon?

Stuart Gordon, I think, is only now hitting stride. He's a writer's director, as well as an actor's director: pretty unique combination. He has a lot of excellent theatre work under his belt and it show in his movies. Also, he has the uncanny ability to create big moments with small budgets. I can't say enough good things about the guy. (He's also a buddy of mine, now, so I've seen just how imaginative he can be in a non-studio context.) I'm just waiting for him to get involved with a movie where he has the budget to go wild!

C.H.U.D. II : BUD THE CHUD.....what happened?

C.H.U.D. II : BUD THE CHUD! You! I finally caught up with this sucker on video. Watching this was like volunteering for all-day root canal work. What happened? It was filmed.

I entered the project as a favour to a friend. Vestron was going to make this movie. Period. Unfortunately, they had no script. (A small

glitch, I know.) I concocted this zany horror/comedy that everyone got really excited about. It was sort of a Bob Hope/Bing Crosby approach. You know, "The Road To The Undead"? Anyway, things started to fall apart fairly rapidly after I handed in the script. The director had his vision. The producer had his. The studio had theirs. The sum total of all that vision was a flick that only Helen Keller could get off on.

With HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS, you have learnt to International recognition, how has it's huge success affected your workload?

The nicest change that has taken place in my life since HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS opened is that, finally, people are asking me what I'd like to write. I'm not in a situation where I'm tied to a studio and an executive walks in and says: "We need a re-write on this movie about a talking whale. Get right on it."

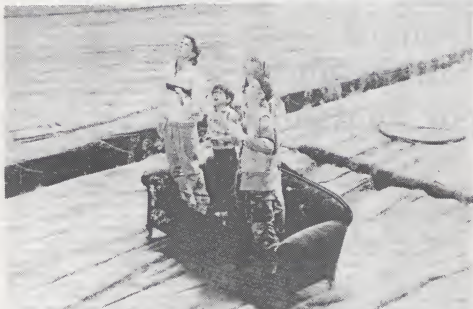
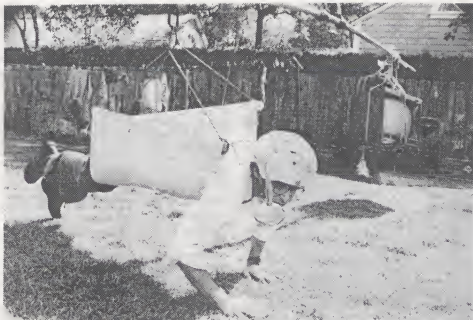
The movie's success has helped me convince a lot of studios that old-fashioned entertainment, whether it's adventure, fantasy or comedy, doesn't have to be regarded as passe. That's a real plus, for me, personally. I'd love to see more old time films. Sheer entertainment. In terms of fantasy/adventure, Spielberg and Lucas have had a lock on that for the last dozen years or so.

Any major changes in the finished film from your original story?

The finished film had about 90% of the visual whimsies and 40% of the heart of my final script. HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS, when given the green light by Disney, had a lot more warmth and a lot more emotion than the finished film. About six or eight weeks before the cameras rolled, the director of the film decided that the movie didn't have enough of his vision in it, so three writers were hired to insert more "gags" and one-liners. The novelization of the film (actually the two novelizations, one for adults and one for juveniles) was based on the script that Disney had originally approved.

Were you excited about the prospects of working for Disney?

Disneyland opened, on the West Coast, when I was a kid on the East Coast. I always wanted to work for Disney. I mean, Walt Disney represented fantasy. He was the closest thing to a magician Hollywood had ever encountered and, probably, ever will. I was really thrilled to find myself at Disney studios four years ago. I mean, there else can you say "I'll meet you on Dopey Drive?"



Are you happy with Joe Johnston's direction?

Let's just say I think that the direction of the film left a lot to be desired in the non-effects sequences.

I believe that Stuart Gordon was to have been the original director, how do you think he would have handled it?

I was really disappointed when Stuart Gordon had to leave the film for health reasons. Sets were under construction. The script had been approved and actors were about to be cast. Had Stuart remained with the project, I think you would have seen an exceptional fantasy film, with three-dimensional characters, a novel lesson to be found and just as many eye-boggling effects. Stuart had storyboarded every effects scene (but the scorpion bit) back in 1987-1988. They all were in the green-lighted, original script. (I later wrote most of the scorpion routine when Joe took over.)

Is it just a coincidence that your three most successful films (TROLL, DOLLS and MONEY...) have all featured little people/creatures?

Heh... I guess I do have an affinity for little people and critters. My grandfather was English. My grandpop, Irish. I was brought up to believe

in fantasy. I mean, it was a given. I love the idea of going out into your garden, one day, and catching a glimpse of a wee 'un. In fact, I'm planning a novel, now, based on little people. I'm also 5'6" tall, so that could have something to do with it as well.

Do you have any strong views on film censorship?

I'm opposed to any type of censorship. Right now, in the States, a lot of Ken and Barbie-type parents are up in arms about rock lyrics. They want warning labels on albums and such, thus allowing government to take over some parenting responsibilities.

In terms of film? It's like this: If you don't want to see a certain type of movie, don't go. No individual has the right to impose his or her views on someone else. Personally, I'm not a big fan of HELLRAISER-type films. Other people are, I don't go to see them. They do. Seems like a nice system to me.

One of the funniest censorship brouhahas I've read about, of late, centred on some late reaction from people who objected to the BBC reading of 'Lady Chatterly's Lover' on the radio. You don't like that sort of stuff? Don't listen! Turn off the radio! Flex those wrist muscles! I mean, in a world of pollution, economic hardship, racism, religious fanatics, terrorism and poverty...who cares about reading 'Lady



Chatterly'? Has the global I.Q. dropped as a result of the Greenhouse Effect or what?

Are there any particular film makers that you admire and would like to work with?

I'd love to work with Joe Dante. A script of mine, MATINEE, may be his next project. I'll find out in a week or so. He loves it and, so far, won't let anyone else direct it. Joe and his partner, producer Mike Finnell, are wonderful folks. They don't try to hide the child in their hearts. Those are the kinds of folks I gravitate towards. I'd also like to work with Jon Davison, the producer of ROBOCOOP and AIRPLANE!. He's another great and goofy guy. I guess I'd like to work with anybody who still thinks that making movies is fun stuff. You know: the kind of person who drives onto the studio and leaves his or her ego at the front gate?

What projects are you currently working on and what are your future plans?

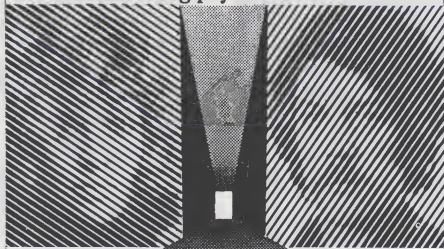
Jeez, I'm working pretty hard, right now, both in terms of books and films. A horror novel of mine, 'Orphans', has just been published over here, as well as a mystery novel, 'Bazille Dazille' (the second of a series). My novelization of ROBOCOOP 2 will be out this year, as well.

In terms of films, I'm finishing up work on the script for SHORT CIRCUIT III as well as one called DOOGIE CITY (an adventure/comedy for Dan Aykroyd). I re-wrote a Michael Caine, Roger Moore film entitled BULLSEYE! but have no idea what the hell the finished film will look like. (Could be right up there with C.J.W.D. II). I'm also going to take a crack at updating THE LITTLE RASCALS for Universal. A couple of producers are interested in adapting a mystery novel of mine, 'The Con Game', for the screen. An old-time science-fiction/fantasy adventure, is in the planning stages with a couple of producers at Paramount and, get this, I'm actually going to have lunch with Bob Hope in a few weeks!

I mean, talk about thrill! Here's a man whose been around Hollywood for nearly sixty years. It seems that he'd like to return to films and he's looking for a kindred spirit with story ideas... It's little perks like this that make sticking with the movie business worthwhile. No matter how bad the smog is out here, how self-centred some executives can be, how egocentric some of your peers are, every so often, you find yourself thinking about what you're doing and wind up humming 'Hooray for Hollywood'. Not often, but just enough to keep you going.

My thanks go to Ed Naha and Forrest J Ackerman for making this interview possible.

Daphne du Maurier's shattering psychic thriller.



Julie Christie Donald Sutherland in "DON'T LOOK NOW" X

Produced by PETER KATZ
Directed by NICHOLAS ROEG
Executive Producer ANTHONY B. UNGER
Screenplay by ALLAN SCOTT and CHRIS BRYANT

Technicolor®

A British Lion Presentation

SYNOPSIS

N.B. - Much of the power of DON'T LOOK NOW for first time viewers comes from the shock ending, so those who haven't seen the film and don't know how it ends are advised to get a copy of the film before reading the following feature which does reveal this ending...

"Nothing is what it seems"

On a bright, autumn Sunday afternoon, John Baxter and his wife Laura are in their Suffolk country home while their children, Johnny, 11, and Christine, 8, play outside near the pond.

Laura is looking up the answer to a question posed by Christine while John is viewing slides of a Venetian church he is to restore, intrigued by a small red-clothed figure standing to one side of the frame. Outside, Johnny rides his bike over a pane of glass as Christine, in red like the figure in the slide, wanders towards the pond to retrieve her ball. Back inside, John accidentally spills some water over the slide he has just been examining and starts to mop it up, but suddenly he straightens and rushes from the room. As John runs outside Johnny is running towards the house but John doesn't need telling what has happened and wades straight into the pond in an effort to save the drowning Christine. He pulls her from the water but despite his attempts at mouth to mouth resuscitation he is too late and carries the limp, lifeless body of Christine towards the house. Unsure of what has happened, Laura is still in the house and passing a window she glimpses out to see John bringing Christine's dead body towards her; she screams.

"There's one who's blind, she's the one who can see"

We are now in Venice, several weeks later, where Laura has accompanied John as they try to recover from the shock of their daughter's death. They are in a restaurant waiting to order their meal, Laura is writing to Johnny at his boarding school while John is looking at slides again. John is made uneasy by the stares of two old women sitting at a nearby table. A sudden chill gust of wind blowing through the room blows some dust into the eyes of one of the women and Laura goes to their aid, escorting them to the restroom. Here she learns that they are Scottish sisters, Wendy and Heather, on a visitor holiday. Heather is blind, hence her difficulty in helping her sister with the dirt in her eye, but, Wendy tells Laura, Heather has second sight. Laura is unsure how to react to this until Heather tells her that she has 'seen' Christine sitting at the table between her and John and that she was happy and laughing. Overwhelmed, Laura returns to the table where she collapses and is taken to hospital. Later at the hospital John arrives to find Laura stated as she tells him what Heather has told her. John is sceptical, but his joy at the change in Laura overrides this and he happily prepares to take her back to the hotel.

"I know this place..."

Laura wants to stop at a church to say a prayer for Christine, but on the way there their launch is delayed by police boats investigating a murder. They arrive at the church and Laura lights several candles for Christine. John is uncomfortable in the church and his discomfort is

increased when he sees the two sisters come into the church.

They are now late for their meeting with the bishop who is overseeing John's work on the church. The meeting is awkward but brief as the bishop makes his excuses and leaves.

John and Laura return to their hotel room and make love.

Later that night they go out to a restaurant but on the way they get lost among the narrow, winding Venice streets. Momentarily separated from Laura, John glimpses a small figure in red darting among the alleyways. Reunited, they find their way back to familiar territory and continue to the restaurant without further incident.

"He has the gift... even if he doesn't know it; even if he's resisting it"

As John resumes work on the church, Laura meets up with the sisters again and eventually convinces a resistant Heather to try and contact Christine for her; Wendy helps by inviting Laura and John to tea, and Heather is pleased that John will be present because she senses that he too has psychic powers.

John's pleas to Laura to see reason fall on deaf ears and he reluctantly agrees to accompany her to the sisters' pensione, but on the way there they argue again and John stalks off. Laura keeps her date with the sisters while John broods in a nearby cafe.

The scene begins and Heather goes into a bizarre trance, moaning organically as Laura stares in horror and wonder.

Perturbed, John tries to get to the sisters' room but is repelled by a man staying in a room across the hall.

Coming out of the trance, Heather pleads with Laura to heed Christine's warning that John is in danger and that they should leave Venice immediately.

Laura meets up with John outside and they return to their hotel room where they argue again when John refuses to accept any of what Laura is saying; he is then promptly sick. At John's insistence Laura agrees to start taking her pills again, but as soon as he leaves the room she tucks it up her sleeve.

That night they are awoken by a phone call from Johnny's boarding school in England informing them that he has been in an accident. Laura is convinced that this is the warning that Heather was referring to and insists on flying back to England at once. John agrees to follow as soon as possible and sees her off to the airport.

John continues to work on the church but danger awaits and he is lucky to escape without injury when the scaffold he is working from collapses. Shaken, John decides to take a short walk and the bishop goes with him. As they walk they come across a canal where the police are recovering a woman's body from the murky waters. John learns that she has been murdered, another victim of a killer stalking the Venice night.

John returns to his hotel room and starts to clear it out ready for when the hotel closes for the winter.

"What is it you fear, Mister Baxter"

Later, as he travels on a vaporetto on the Grand Canal, John is amazed to see Laura on a private launch, standing between the two sisters. He calls out to her but she doesn't seem to hear and doesn't respond.

John immediately returns to the hotel looking for her, but she hasn't been there. He tries to find the sisters' pensione to see if Laura is there with them, but unable to remember where it is and worried by the murders taking place in the city, he goes to the police. He has the police artist make sketches of the sisters and takes them to the police Inspector, along with a photo

of Laura. The Inspector is both interested and sympathetic but is unable to offer any help; the sisters even pass beneath the window as he watches without his recognising them. He advises John to try and find the sisters' pensione again and, when John leaves the Inspector has him followed.

John wanders stately around, memories of Christine flooding his mind. Suddenly he catches sight of the little girl in the red again and sets off in pursuit. He soon loses sight of her among the twisting streets but then finds himself outside the cafe where he spent the evening when Laura was with the sisters and from here is quickly able to locate their pensione. But they have already left and despite questioning the owners, with help from the policeman who was following him, John is unable to learn where they have gone.

With the hotel closed, John is staying with the bishop and he goes to tell him what has happened. While he is there he takes the opportunity to call England to see how Johnny is and to his surprise he hears Laura's voice assuring him that everything is alright and that she is flying out to rejoin him later that night.

"Let him not go!"

Meanwhile, Heather and Wendy have been arrested and questioned at the police station. John goes there to apologise and secure their release, and finding Heather there on her own he volunteers to escort her back to her new pensione.

Laura's plane lands and she is taken to the police station where the Inspector gives her the sisters' new address.

When John and Heather arrive at the new pensione they find Wendy already there and despite a frosty reception from her, John accepts Heather's invitation to stay for a drink. But then Heather goes into some kind of epileptic fit and John allows Wendy to usher him out as she attends to her sister with practiced calm. As John steps out into the night, Heather has recovered enough to desperately urge her sister to go after him as he is in great danger. Wendy does as Heather asks but he is already out of sight. As Wendy stands outside the pensione wondering what to do, Laura arrives and Wendy insists that she come up to their room, but as soon as she gets there Heather tells her of the latest warning and sends her after John.

In his room the bishop awakes with a start; putting on the light, he looks across at a religious painting on the bedside table and, reassured, he goes back to sleep.

Back in the streets, John has seen the little girl in red again and still associating her with Christine runs after her. This time an angry man is also giving chase and John tries to elude her escape as he follows. Laura is also coming and isn't far behind the angry man. John follows the girl through some large iron gates and quickly shuts them to keep the pursuers out. He seems to have lost the little girl but then hears a whispering coming from a small room at the top of a short flight of steps. Slowly he climbs the steps, all the while giving reassurance that he is a friend and means her no harm.

Laura and the angry man arrive at the gates but are unable to proceed any further and stand



pressed against the metal bars.

John approaches the little girl who is huddled in the corner of the dark, dark room...

She turns to face him and in the following terrifying moments John comes face to face with his very destiny...

REVIEW

"NOTHING IS WHAT IT SEEMS"

For horror film fans 1973 will always be remembered as the year that *THE EXORCIST* was launched on an unsuspecting world. But while *THE EXORCIST* was scaring audiences into paring with record box office receipts, another equally important if not quite so influential or financially successful genre film was released. That film was Nicolas Roeg's *DON'T LOOK NOW*.

Born in London on August 15, 1928, Nicolas Roeg entered the film industry at the age of nineteen, and starting out as a clipper boy worked his way up through the 50's and 60's to become one of the most respected film cameramen in the business with his cinematography on such films as *THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH* (1964), *FARBEHINT 451* (1966), *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD*, (1967) and *PETULIA* (1967). He also gained some experience as a script-writer and second-unit director before finally getting his chance to direct, after over twenty years in the industry. In 1968, Roeg originally intended *WALKABOUT* to be his directorial debut but when the backers dropped out he teamed up with friend Donald Cammell to co-direct *PERFORMANCE* from a script by Cammell with Roeg also acting as cinematographer. *PERFORMANCE* was then shelved until 1970, but after a successful release in that year Roeg was able to secure financing for *WALKABOUT*, released in 1971. With his first solo directorial credit also a success Roeg was now ready to look for another project.

It was producer Peter Katz who first saw the potential for a film in Daphne Du Maurier's short story 'Don't Look Now' and he commissioned British script-writer Alan Scott and Chris Bryant to write a first-draft screenplay which he then sent to a number of directors for their consideration. One of these was Nicolas Roeg and he was immediately attracted to it because it was "a good yarn" within which he could continue to explore favourite themes and ideas, so he joined the project and helped develop the script.

Daphne Du Maurier's short story, written in 1970, was first published in an anthology of her short stories under the title 'Not After Midnight' (after another story in the book) and this anthology is still available, although it was retitled 'Don't Look Now' after the film's release. It was also printed in the 1969 book

'No, But I Saw The Movie' along with seventeen other short stories which served as the basis for popular and successful films, several of which are of interest to genre fans, but reading this instead of Du Maurier's book would rob you of four other great stories from this master storyteller so you'll just have to get both.

'Don't Look Now' was the eighth of Daphne Du Maurier's works to be filmed (three had previously been filmed by Alfred Hitchcock, including 'The Birds', also based on a short story) and while the tone and mood of the story are considerably different to the film, with John and Laura different characters, the backbone of the story is still there and it is a terrific read, finishing with a brilliant last line (the first being 'Don't look now...') which throws the whole piece into sharp relief. So good is this line (and you'll have to read the story to find out what it is) that Roeg tried to keep it in as a line of dialogue from John but eventually dropped it, leaving the visuals to say the same thing.

With much of the story taking place in Venice it made sense for the film to be made as a joint

venture between England and Italy, as Peter Kater, London based Casey Productions joined associate producer Frederick Mauller's Rome based Elarado Films for a genuine Anglo-Italian co-production.

Casting of the two leads - Donald Sutherland as John Baxter and Julie Christie as his wife Laura - involved a fair amount of good fortune, not only because Roeg was able to secure the services of two international stars willing to give themselves so completely to the project (as witnesses by that (in)famous love scene) but also because both were originally committed to other projects until, in a period of ten days, both of these other projects fell through and they were able to sign on for *DON'T LOOK NOW* - international stars they may have been but they still weren't known to Daphne Du Maurier who asked for photos of them to see what John and Laura looked like.

Italian casting included Massimo Sestini, an actor who already had over 150 films to his credit, as the bishop; Renato Scarpa as the police inspector, his lack of English being no obstacle as Roeg liked the extra tension this brought to his scenes with Donald Sutherland; and Leopoldo Trieste as the hotel manager, a former film critic previously used by Fellini after he reviewed one of his films; while Clelia Matania's perfect English meant that, despite the fact that she hails from Naples, she was the perfect choice for Wendy, one of the Scottish sisters the Baxter's encounter in Venice.

With Roeg heading over the cinematography reins to Anthony Richmond filming began in December 1972, and after one week's filming in and around the picturesque Hertfordshire home of actor David Tree (who was subsequently coaxed out of retirement to play the part of the headmaster at Johnny's prep school) the cast and crew moved on to Venice for a further seven weeks shooting in January and February of 1973.

All the Venice filming was location work, including the Europa hotel where the Baxter's stay, although the interiors of their room were shot at the Beuer Grunwald where the larger rooms allowed the camera to be pulled back further. Exteriors, of course, comprised the highly photogenic narrow streets and winding canals of the city itself.

Dealing with the forces of fate, faith, superstition, fear and death, *DON'T LOOK NOW* is primarily a film about second sight and the need to look beyond the limitations of the normal senses and restrictions of the normal life frame to find the true meaning of things. All of which combines superbly under Roeg's assured direction to produce a film that intrigues, grips, thrills and eventually chills as the lead characters' refusal to recognise his own latent psychic abilities and act on the signs they reveal to him creates the tension in the story and leads to the tragic conclusion.

It's the familiar, brilliantly executed Roeg devices of time-shifting and the juxtaposing of images, allied to masterly editing, that turns this deceptively simple story (it is, after all, based on a short story) into a dazzling tour-de-force of favourite Roeg themes and ideas as complex and labyrinthine as the twisting streets and alleys of the city of the story's setting, and just as the normal senses prove too blinding for John Baxter to understand what is being shown to him so the limitations of conventional film grammar are too blinding for Roeg to fully express himself.

The tone of the whole piece is set right from the opening scenes as rain splashes into the pond where the Baxter's daughter will soon drown, spreading ripples across its surface just as the themes and motifs spread from this point. The opening scene is immediately connected to the latter part by the insertion of a shot of what we will come to recognise as the curtain-covered glass of the window in the hotel room where the Baxter's stay in Venice - this was Roeg's idea but, he generously acknowledges, the actual choice of shot was suggested by editor Greeno

Gilford. After the credits we come to the drowning of Christine - this whole sequence was to have been a pre-credit one but, wisely, Roge eventually decided against this, feeling it broke up the picture too much - and the first presentation of the recurring motifs and images that punctuate the film. The first hint of John's psychic powers comes as he involuntarily jerks his head up at the same moment that his son Johnny has a minor accident outside on his bike; then such more pronounced when he runs from the room as he senses, too late, that Christine is in danger. The importance of water is obvious right from the start with Johnny and Christine playing outside by the pond as inside John is examining a slide of the church he will be restoring in Venice, perturbed by a small figure in red in the corner of the frame - making the first connection between the figure and the similarly red-clad Christine in his and the viewer's mind - before he accidentally spills a glass of water on it to see it spread like a bloodstain across the frame (of both the slide and film), anticipating Christine's death and linking blood and death with Venice and the figure in red; meanwhile Laura is looking up the answer to a question posed by Christine - "Why if the earth is round does water freeze flat?" - and one of the books she consults for the answer is 'Beyond The Fragile Geometry of Space', a fictitious book invented by Roge as a work of John Baxter. Glass also serves as a key element as Johnny rides over a piece of glass just prior to Christine's death, cutting himself as he picks the splinters from the tyre of his bike; John is viewing glass slides and spills a glass of water over the slide of the church; and as John tries in vain to revive Christine, Johnny stands nearby tuddling a fragment of the glass he rode over between his fingers - water and glass are intrinsically linked throughout and an early connection is made with the answer to Christine's question (Lake Ontario curves three degrees East to West when frozen; therefore, frozen water doesn't freeze flat) as frozen water has a glass-like appearance. Mirrors and mirror images are a third recurring element introduced in the early scenes with Christine seen reflected in the water of the pond (both water and glass will act as errors during the film), and she mirrors Laura's hand to mouth gesture while also mirroring John toasting a packet of cigarettes to Laura by tossing her ball towards the pond. The final recurring motif, the colour red, also features strongly, both Christine and the figure in the slide are in red, Christine plays with a red and white ball and there are red flowers behind Laura when she catches her first glimpse of John carrying Christine's lifeless body towards the house, causing her to melt that short, piercing scream that provides the Hitchcockian link to the whining drill at work on the Venice church, neatly introducing us into the main body of the story.

It's the method of Christine's death that marks the most significant departure from Daphne Du Maurier's story, and it's a genuine surprise when reading the story for the first time having already seen the film to discover that she doesn't die by drowning but dies of meningitis; this not only robs the Baxter's of feelings of guilt and whether they, especially John, could have done more to save her, it also removes the seemingly vital link between water in the prologue and the rest of the story taking place in Venice, the perfect setting to continue the water motif.

The themes now established it's up to the viewer to follow them throughout the film, to "look now", for failure to read and understand the signs can prove fatal as John Baxter learns to his cost. In this we are aided by Roge's all-seeing camera, always the most visual of directors (as you'd expect with his cameraman background) he uses the camera to probe and explore the components of each scene, investing mundane objects with sinister and portentous overtones - that slide, Wendy's seamed brooch,



and statues and pictures - examining everything from different viewpoints, counterpointing and juxtaposing images one after the other, searching for their true meaning and purpose, to order and piece together the parts of the mosaic just as John is doing before the bottom falls out of his world as the scaffold collapses from under him.

Roge is also the master of time-shifting within his film and the fluid cutting between past, present and future events plays a vital part in the proceedings - this is best seen in the love scene, intercutting John and Laura making love with shots of them getting dressed to go out afterwards, amplifying the transitory nature of the activity; and it is perhaps even better in the scene where the plank falls from the inside of the church roof onto John's scaffold as we catch a brief glimpse of it entering at the top of the frame then, before we can assess its importance, Roge cuts quickly away and when we have almost disowned it it suddenly comes crashing down on top of John.

But John Baxter the rationalist is only able to operate in the present (he keeps his watch on during the love-making and is seen resetting it by the bedside clock in the scenes interact with it) and so when he and Laura are lost in the narrow Venice streets at night and he has to feel his way out he announces, surprised, "I know this place", when in fact it is a place he will know later in the story; and later when he sees Laura on a boat with the two sisters whom she is supposed to be in England he immediately assumes that it is happening at that moment.

It's a neat irony that a film that demands (and repays) such close visual attention should constantly show how wholly inadequate normal sight is in understanding the true meaning of what is seen: "Seeing is believing", John tells Laura but it is the blind sister, Heather, who is psychic, and her first encounter with the

Baxter's comes when the other sister is temporarily blinded causing Laura to go to her aid; lost at night, John has to feel his way along a wall - as Heather would - and when he and Laura do get back to familiar territory they emerge under an "Optica" (Opticiana) sign; the sketches of the sisters that John takes to the police inspector (who absent-mindedly draws eyes on the one of Heather) prove so inadequate that they are able to walk right underneath his window as he watches without his recognizing them, and later when Laura sees one of the sketches and tells the inspector that "it doesn't really look like her" his response is a resigned "it doesn't matter". Impassive observers abound, the attendant in the restaurant washroom, people on the bridge when Laura is taken to hospital, and again when the body is dragged from the canal, half-seen figures peeping from windows as John passes at night, statues standing like sentinels and even the eye of Christ staring out from the mosaic.

Likewise, language creates as easy barriers as it overcomes, highlighted by the differences between the English characters speech and the Italian locals, and much of the subsidiary dialogue is in Italian with no help for those unfamiliar with the language other than the tone used. This is best demonstrated in the scene between John and the police inspector (as stated earlier, such of this difficulty was genuine). There's also confusion between the English speaking characters, such as John and Laura's conversation in the hotel room when she is speaking from the bathroom; also in the phone conversations between John in Venice and Johnny's school in England, and when John asks Laura what she has said in her letter to Johnny, she replies "Oh nothing, it's just a letter". This confusion of language also features in two humorous moments, a fairly conventional one with the misspelling of Laura's surname on the sign held by the man who has come to collect her from the airport, and a more bizarre one at the scene when Heather enquires "Are your legs crossed?", and unsure which of them she is addressing, Laura, whose legs aren't crossed, crosses hers, while Wendy, whose are, uncrosses hers.

Indeed, the only clearly stated message in the film is the one that comes from beyond the grave, Christine's warning to John, a message that he is unable or unwilling to accept.

But believing is clearly no substitute for having the gift. Laura desperately believes what Heather has told her, excitedly telling John how she described Christine's red scar when all she really told her was that it was a "shiny little



me", and earlier she only takes a cursory glance at the altar that had disturbed John as before tossing it aside. At the scene she is totally convinced that Heather has made contact with Christine yet is still left pleading "what did she say?" that did she say?" And while she, unlike John, believes in Christine's warning she is equally ready to accept that she meant the accident to Johnny at home in England and prepares to leave immediately, declaring "They were right, you see. This is what they meant". Perhaps most significantly of all, she is never present when John has the sightings of his nemeses, the first time being when they are momentarily separated when lost at night, and the other times she is either out of the country or back in Venice but still not reunited (and never will be) with John; and finally she is left shut out behind the gates as John is drawn to his doom.

On the other hand, perhaps believing is enough for Laura; she only really comes to life after she learns from Heather that "Christine is still with us", and whereas in the flashback to her in the car in rain-swept England preparing to leave the cottage for Christine's funeral she looks totally morose, once John's funeral she has taken on a much more serene demeanour, suggesting that John's death as predicted in the warnings of Christine has affirmed her belief in a life beyond where John has joined their daughter asking his death much easier to accept.

Religious symbolism also plays an important part in the film, a feature not in the book nor in the original script sent to Roeg for it was his idea that John should restore churches for a living (just as he is trying to restore his own faith in the church). John is uncomfortable in the church where Laura goes to light a candle for Christine - "I don't like this church at all", he says. "Well I do" is her fire reply - as she lights her candles he stands nearby fiddling with an electric light, then drops into a shape prayer when he sees the two sisters come into the church. The church John is restoring - the church of Saint Nicholas of the beggars, the patron saint of children and scholars - are told but by myopic people says that he's the patron saint of children and scholars (water again) - is the scene of his accident on the scaffolding, and almost another one earlier when he is helping manoeuvre a gargoyle into position, the queer, grotesque figure of the gargoyle seeming ominously strange and this is confirmed in the final montage as John lies dying. John has to cross the Bridge of Miracles to get from the church to the hotel and of course his first sight of the hooded figure who will later scythe his down - his own personal Grief Reaper - comes in the slide of the church.

The bishop is an interesting and complex character, aloof and seemingly disinterested in John's work on the church ("They're God's churches and He doesn't seem to care about them"), giving John the great line of "... he doesn't give an ecclesiastical fuck about the church", a neat pun but obviously one not appreciated by the TV censors who cut this line (and another using the dreaded 'F' word), along with that love scene, on the film's early TV showings. (Naturally, this ludicrous situation has since been rectified and the fully uncensored version is shown nowadays.) But just as we think we are learning something about the bishop, such as when he deliberately lets his hand brush Laura's breast as he opens his coat, we then get another scene which seems to contradict it, like him in his room, a small, cramped space with an impossibly small bed more suited to a young boy. There are also clear signs that he has limited psychic powers. "I do believe in omens", he tells John, "I wish I didn't have to, but I do" (this line also serves as another example of the film's ambiguous dialogue - does he mean I do believe or I do have to believe?), and later, as John approaches his fate, he wakes up with a start and takes a reassuring look at a religious painting (Roeg wanted, but he couldn't find in Venice, a

copy of 'Jesus the Good Shepherd') before returning to sleep. Roeg offered this clue to the bishop's motivation in an interview with Tom Milne and Penelope Houston in the winter 73/4 'Sight & Sound': "I wanted a man who is a prince of the church, a bishop, whose faith was linked to all faith, but he was struck with his form." Water is everywhere in the film: Christine drowns; by being in Venice John is surrounded by water; the latest victim of the Venice killer is pulled from the murky waters of one of the canals, reminding John of how he pulled Christine from the pond. But where water is usually used as a symbol of life, here it has a much closer association with death: John spills water on the slide and it spreads like a bloodstain, a precursor to Christine's death by water (and to eye blind, fancifully perhaps, the shape the split water forms on the slide looks like an embryo, echoing the young, still largely undeveloped Christine, until the water continues to spread and fill the frame as Christine dies - the embryo's shape on the slide is also mirrored in Wendy's marmalade brooch, again reminding us of the drowned Christine and causing John to double-take when he sees her wearing it in the restaurant).

If water is a harbinger of death and disaster then glass is the fragile barrier between this world and the next - glass wasn't just chosen for its symbolic quality but also because "... glass sets up a sensation of fear, something dangerous and brittle. This is built into everyone. Almost everyone has a fear of shattered glass... so fire one moment and so dangerous the next, it's frightening." ('Sight & Sound' Roeg interview again) - and the breaking of glass prefigures, or is part of, almost every accident in the film: Johnny rides his bike over a pane of glass just before Christine drowns (and cuts himself on the splinters); when Laura collapses at the restaurant she knocks over the table, breaking glass and spilling water; the plank that falls on to John's scaffold first smashes through a pane of glass attached to the scaffold for John to view slides on; even Johnny's accident at school (slightly suspected appendicitis in the book) in a fire drill has a glass connection - in case of fire break glass; and finally John in his death throes lashes out wildly with his feet and kicks out a small window above the entrance to the room where he seals his doom, breaking the glass as he passes over from this life to the next. Laura is separated from her dead daughter by a window at the cottage while the psychic John, and Johnny (the first hint that he too has psychic powers), are outside with Christine; and the glass at the hospital floor acts as a mirror reflecting the children in the ward next to Laura's room; and also showing Laura through the glass before we join Laura on her side of the glass as it becomes a kind of window on the next world for her where the children laugh and play happily (as Heather said Christine was), one even tossing a red and white ball similar to Christine's. And if we take water as a sort of liquid glass then Christine falling into the still water of the pond breaks through the barrier, and John's efforts to save her (we see him pull her from the water three times, each in slow motion) show his trying to pull her back through the barrier, to keep her in this world.

Mirrors and mirror images are a recurring theme in most Roeg films and DON'T LOOK NOW is no exception. These mirror images include mirrored actions such as those mentioned earlier from the opening scene and also when John sits in the cafe with a drink as Laura, at the sisters' for the second, sits holding a similar glass, and again at the end when John looks back towards the following Laura as she looks back. There are also mirror images within the same scene, including the religious painting on the wall of the sisters' room showing three women worshipping the infant Christ(ine) as the scene starts, and again with the painting in the Inspector's office featuring a man whose position and posture John comes to mimic. Literal mirror images include Christine (and the figure in red) reflected in



water, Laura's leage split into two by the mirror in the restaurant washroom after she has been told about Christine by Heather, and John in their hotel bathroom, reflected into infinity.

Roeg also makes extremely effective use of colour, or rather the lack of it (ie. all the photographs are in black and white, only John's slides are in colour), presenting out of season Venice as a drab, bleak, forbidding place, far removed from the picture postcard views we are used to seeing. Even the characters' clothes, for the most part, are drab greys and browns, so when a strong colour - red - is deliberately introduced into a scene it heightens the effect of this traditional warning sign. Red seems to permeate every scene and you soon find yourself actively searching for it (and when on subsequent viewings you find it in a scene where you hadn't noticed it before it can be disconcerting). Red has an especially strong link with John and his psychic abilities; he is unusually disturbed by the red-clad figure in the slide; he is repelled and frightened off by a man in a red dressing gown when he tries to reach Laura at the scene; a red towel hangs in the hotel bathroom but both John (the unbeliever) and Laura (the ungifted) dry with the white ones, and there's a red carpet in the hotel foyer but John walks on the bare floor beside it. Red also helps identify those with psychic powers. John wears a scarf with red in it; the bishop's traditional clothing includes a red cap; Heather stuffs something red into her pocket just before the scene starts; and Johnny is seen under a red blanket at the school after his accident, and he also wears a red cap at John's funeral, a strange colour for such an occasion, but this and his appearance among the final montage as John lies dying offers the final proof that he has inherited his father's psychic powers (like father like son). And red abounds during the final collage of images and warnings that have been presented to John when they return to work his in his final moments as, too late, and said tolling bells, the pieces of the puzzle finally come together for him, and again we see the slide but this time the red stain continues to spread until it reaches the edge of the frame and disappears into a watery blue.

All these elements are present in the opening scene and converge again in one breathtaking vignette where John stops by a canal with a red long-sleeved garment hanging on a washing line suspended across the water and notices the leage of the seal figure in red reflected in the still water, reminding him of Christine at play by the pond; this image is suddenly shattered as an unseen hand throws a bucket of water into the canal, reminding us of the rain splashing onto the surface of the pond during the credit sequence, causing the seal figure to run off as we dissolve through to a close-up of a section of red on John's scarf.

Although John's fate seems to be sealed by his refusal to understand and act on the things being shown to him, there is at the same time an overwhelming feeling of pre-destiny here, a feeling that John couldn't escape even if he had believed the warnings. This is compounded by such events as John closing the window at the restaurant, trying to shut out the chill wind (from beyond the grave), only to have a door blow open to instigate the chain of events leading to the Barker's contact with the sisters that

ultimately leads to John's final confrontation with destiny. After this door is constantly closing on John at the sisters' pensione when he tries to reach Laura at the scene; the (glass) hotel doors are locked behind him as they close for the winter; and John closes the gates himself at the conclusion, thinking he is shutting out the pursuers when in fact he is closing himself in with the killer - even the last shot of England is of a door closing at Johnny's school. When John finally agrees to take a few weeks off to appease Laura they are awoken in the night by the call that takes Laura back to England, leaving John firely in place in Venice. Equally, no one seems to be able to help John in his plight; the bishop stands directly beneath John during his accident on the scaffold, neither able to help or to get out of the way; the police inspector, who had earlier stopped what he was doing at the scene of the murder to watch John go by in a boat with Laura on their way back from the hospital, offers a sympathetic ear but little else - Roeg made an interesting comment on this scene in the 'Sight & Sound' interview which, unfortunately, wasn't followed up by the interviewers: "... the difficulty of communication he had with Donald, the man he knew was going to a victim..." - and the policeman sent to tell John, like the other lapsative observers, is only able to watch but no more. It could even be said that the people around John help to seal his fate, the warnings from Christine keep her in his mind and lead to his following the red-dotted figure at the end, determined to make amends for his failure to save his daughter; Johnny's accident at school coming at just the moment John had agreed to leave Venice for a time; Laura's insistence on flying back to him in Venice after he learns that she is safe rather than have him come back to her in England as planned; the sisters changing hotels at the time John most needs to find them; and the police inspector advising John to try and relocate the sisters' pensione rather than trying to contact Laura in England in case she has returned there - none of these wilfully steering him to his death but merely playing out their parts just as John does.

And when John does start to accept that there really is some truth in Christine's warnings, first accepting it on a subconscious level when he is sick after Laura returns from the scene totally convinced of the message ("I haven't thrown up for ten years", he says as somewhere deep inside he is hit by the frightening implications of what until now he has been happy to disbelieve as "Huebo-Juebo") leading to his compliance with Laura's pleas for them to leave Venice even for a short time (which is immediately suppressed by Johnny's accident); and this is followed by a more conscious acceptance after his accident at the church, but now he completely misreads it, feeling safer now that he thinks the accident has happened and the danger has passed, allowing him to stay in Venice rather than leave. And come the end when John is following the figure in red to his doom, he clearly senses that Laura is coming after him, causing him to look back, yet he is still compelled to go on...

But there are red herrings too, not only for the characters (John and Johnny's accidents) but also for the viewer; the two sisters laughing uproariously in their room just after they have agreed to contact Christine; Wendy's laughing face from this scene appearing in a spot of light as John climbs to the scaffold moments before his accident; Laura pressed against the bars of the gate at the end, looking to where John has followed the small figure in red as she calls out "Derlings". As well as more traditional methods of creating suspense such as echoing footsteps and blooded screams. The best known and most controversial of these red herrings is the two sisters laughing in their room; the subject of much discussion and speculation at the time, Roeg explained to Tom Milne and Penelope Houston that it wasn't in the script when they started filming

and offered this explanation for its inclusion: "I thought they were getting away with too much... being too definitely and certainly clairvoyant... they were becoming (too) obvious for the audience".

Another even more famous and controversial scene was the love scene - it must have dismayed if not surprised Roeg that in a film of such complex images and ideas this scene should have taken so much of the publicity given to the film - and it is a love scene, not a sex scene; a love scene of such intense sensuousness and eroticism that it leaves no doubt that this is the first time they have made love since Christine's death (as it will be the last) as well as reaffirming the deep love they have for each other even if they haven't been able to express it since leaving England. Roeg has offered this thought: "I wanted a scene of a man and a woman married, a loving relationship. I wanted to feel there was going to be a progression of life. They had lost a child. The last thing I wanted was the sense that they would have another." In the script it had simply said "they made love and went out to dinner" and Roeg and editor Graeme Clifford viewed the film with the scene in and out, but decided that without it "they appeared terribly grumpy all the time". Such was the controversy surrounding this scene that there was talk that it would have to be heavily cut for the film to avoid an 'X' rating in the USA, but as far as I can ascertain the scene only received 'barely noticeable' minor trimming before being released there.

The excessive attention given to this one scene also served to deter focus from the overall quality of the performances from the two leads. It's a common feature with the work of 'star' directors (such as Kubrick, Cronenberg and Lynch) that the actual stars (i.e. the actors) of their films rarely get the attention and praise they deserve, and this is certainly the case with Nicole and Roeg's films; none more so than DON'T LOOK NOW. Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie give incredibly subtle and naturalistic performances presenting the perfect representation of a married couple which adds to the conviction of that love scene. They also shine in individual moments, and for Donald Sutherland these include John hovering like a distressed animal when he realises that he has lost Christine and also quieter moments, like the one where he finds himself unusually disturbed by the figure in the slide without really knowing why. While Julie Christie is remarkable even by her own impeccable standards, giving another flawless character study with outstanding moments coming when she gives that short sharp scream on seeing Christine's dead body for the first time (it's easy to be convinced when you're not expecting it), but watch it again in slow motion, or even frame by frame, and she doesn't anticipate it in the slightest - perfection), again when she is covered in embarrassment at John's teasing after he has kissed the bishop's ring, and once more when she is trying to coax the reluctant Heather to try and contact Christine for her, Heather insisting that the dead aren't to be called back just for "our entertainment", "it wouldn't be for my entertainment". Consider Laura, the pain of her loss etched on her face and resonating in her voice - put all of these components together and the effect is magical.

The rest of the cast also contribute fine performances, confirming that Roeg isn't just a technical master but that he can also handle actors extremely effectively too. (Meanwhile, Roeg's wife and star of most of his films since 1980, the wonderful Theresa Russell, remains the most underrated actress in Hollywood - who else could have come out of a film scripted by Dennis Potter and directed by Roeg (TRACK 29) as the best thing about it?)

But back to the film in question and perhaps the real star of the piece, the city itself. As photographed by cinematographer Anthony Richmond, out of season Venice takes on a cold inhospitable feel while still managing to retain a kind of

terrible beauty - it's certainly a stark contrast to the sun-baked desert landscapes of the Australian outback Roeg himself captured so magnificently in WALKABOUT. Richmond also adeptly supplies the Gothic feel Roeg was so keen to get and this is particularly evident in the final mist-swept scenes as John hurries to his date with death.

A final key element that deserves special praise is the music composed by Pino Donaggio (orchestrated and conducted by Giampiero Bonacini and available as an original soundtrack album on TER records (TER 1007)), who was employed to score the film after a chance meeting with associate producer Frederick Muller in Venice. It was certainly a fortuitous meeting for his haunting and evocative score, with just a pleasing hint of PSYCHO, adds greatly to the effectiveness of any scenes, especially the opening scenes as the children play by the pond, the love scene (with the amount of free publicity this scene received the music could easily have made a hit single if it had been released - it certainly would have had a great video!), and again at the end as the music swells to a triumphant coda at John's funeral. (Brian De Palma was sufficiently impressed by Donaggio's score for DON'T LOOK NOW to ask him to score CARRIE (1976), and the pair subsequently worked together again on DRESSED TO KILL (1980), BLUM OUT (1981) and BODY DOUBLE (1984).)

The film opened in the UK in November 1973 (and Christmas 1973 in America) and garnered some ecstatic reviews (such as 'what the press said') along with some harsh words from those who didn't, or wouldn't, pay attention, with easily the nastiest coming from Harry Ringel in 'Cinefantastique' (Vol 3 No 3) whose personal attacks on the stars and especially the director suggests some sort of animosity that extended beyond Roeg's film (and as the film picked up three 4-star ratings in 'CQ's' 'Fille ratings' section, along with one 3-star one (and four 1-star ones), finishing third overall behind THE CONVERSATION and THE EXORCIST, you have to wonder why a more sympathetic reviewer wasn't given the chance to have their say). Naturally, as with all Roeg films, there were the usual accusations of pretentiousness (probably from the same people who described the love scene as "gratuitous"), but as a Roeg fan I'll refute this allegation totally, Roeg's art isn't pretentious, neither does he talk down to his audience, rather he gives us every opportunity to come up and join him on his level; now, before anyone mentions that white horse in the opening scene I'll move on...

Happily, over the years the detractors seem to have receded into the woodwork or, hopefully, been sacked and nowadays DON'T LOOK NOW often features on favourite film lists of critics and fans alike - in a 1989 'Time Out' Poll it was 16th in the fans' top 100 and 27th in the critics' - and sits proudly at the top of mine.

So are we talking perfection here? Well, in my opinion - YES! But if I pressed I could find a couple of faults, one being Donald Sutherland's highly suspect haircut (and moustache) which was surely never in fashion, not even in 1973; and, more seriously, those dreadful titles which make it look like we're about to be subjected to some half-arse TV movie rather than the greatest film ever made.

Those who came to the film fully aware of the revelation at the end may find that last claim a bit strong, but I came to the film as a Julie Christie fan looking for a good yarn and can't begin to explain the effect this film had on me when I first saw it. Gripped but perplexed, the film must have worked on this viewer in exactly the way Roeg planned it should on audiences everywhere, so when everything fell into place for me, at the same moment it does for John, followed by the unveiling of that hideous dwarf (You're no old painting yourself - Assistant Ed.) It lead to more sleepless nights than even the ubiquitous THE EXORCIST - I'm not sure what I expected to see, but not that!



It seems that Donald Sutherland was also greatly affected by the experience because not only has he revealed in a TV interview that he insisted on his death scene being filmed last such was his trepidation about this scene, but he also named his second son, born in 1974, Roeg - so it obviously affected him deeply.

DON'T LOOK NOW's reputation continues to grow - and in 1988 it gained possibly the ultimate accolade (it) when it served as the inspiration for a verse in a hit single, 'E=MC²', Big Audio Dynamite's tribute to Roeg and his films - and it is now regarded as a classic of British cinema. Which still doesn't make it any easier to categorise within the fantasy genre, with some reference books listing it - 'The Psychotronic Encyclopedia Of Film' and 'The Horror Film Handbook' - while others, notably 'The Aurum Horror Film Encyclopedia', still choose to ignore it. And when it was released on budget video it came out under the 'Best Of The British Director' heading (and then omitted to mention Roeg on the sleeve, calling it 'Daphne Du Maurier's DON'T LOOK NOW!').

But if Aurum choose to ignore it, horror fans certainly shouldn't make the same mistake for today more than ever DON'T LOOK NOW stands out as a sumptuous feast of visual images and ideas that needs to be savoured over several viewings unlike the majority of today's output which is more akin to junk food in that it seems designed to be consumed quickly and soon forgotten.

Nicolas Roeg remained in the fantasy field for his next film, *THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH* (1976), but that's another story...
MARK MURTON.



CAST & CREDITS

Julie Christie (Laura Baxter), Donald Sutherland (John Baxter), Hilary Mason (Heather), Ciella Menalis (Wendy), Massimo Sestini (Bishop Barberrigo), Renato Scarpa (Inspector Lough), Georgio Tresini (Workman), Leopoldo Trieste (Hotel Manager), David Tree (Anthony Babbage), Ann Rye (Mandy Babbage), Nicholas Salter (Johnny Baxter), Sharon Williams (Christine Baxter), Bruno Cattaneo (Detective Sabatone), Adeline Pavello (Dwarf).

Directed by Nicolas Roeg; Produced by Peter Katz; Executive Producer - Anthony B Under; Screenplay - Alison Scott, Chris Bryant from a story by Daphne Du Maurier; Associate Producer - Frederico Mueller; Director of Photography - Anthony Richmond; Camera & Lenses by Panavision; Art Director - Giovanni Socoli; Set Dresser - Francesco Chianese; Film Editor - Greene Clifford; Sound Editor - Rodney Holland; Assistant Editors - Tony Lawson, Peter Holt; Music by Pino Donaggio; Arranged & Conducted by Giampaolo Bonacchi; Unit Manager - Franco Conduiti; Assistant Director - Francesco Cinieri; Camera Operator - Luciano Tonti; Assistant Camera - Sloan Barnsley; Sound Recordist - Peter Davies; Dubbing Mixer - Bob Jones; Production Accountant - Terence O'Connor; Miss Christie's Wardrobe - Marit Lieberman, Andrea Geler; Wardrobe Mistress - Annamaria Fazi; Make-up - Giancarlo Del Brocco; Hair Stylist - Barry Richardson; Hairdresser - Maria Luisa Gerbini; Casting - Miriam Brekkan, Ugo Vervucchi; Key Grip - Spartaco Nizzi; Stunt Co-ordinator - Richard Graydon; Publicity - Hubert Doyle; Production Executive - Steve Prevlin.

An Anglo-Italian Co-Production.

1973.

Running Time: 110 mins (video: 106 mins).

CASEY-ELDERADO/BRITISH LION.

WARNER HOME VIDEO.

P.S. Anyone know what happened to Sharon Williams who played Christine?

What the press said:

The Good:

"A masterpiece... one of the best ever horror films" - THE TIMES

"A film nobody interested in cinema... should miss... it unquestionably puts Roeg on a level with the most original film-makers this country has produced" - THE GUARDIAN

"The performances throughout... are directed with exceptional feeling... A brilliant film" - SUNDAY TIMES

"Compelling cinema" - DAILY MAIL

"[A] stunningly effective adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier's story DON'T LOOK NOW, a thriller of immense distinction" - SUNDAY EXPRESS

"Dazzling... creepy and highly enjoyable" - DAILY EXPRESS

"Made me jump right out of my seat" - THE OBSERVER

"Chills like vintage Hitchcock" - THE SUN

"The fanciest, most carefully assembled enigma yet seen on the screen... Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland team up wonderfully" - THE NEW YORKER

"Dazzlingly disquieting" - EVENING STANDARD

"A thriller of some depth... the juxtaposition of shots could scarcely be improved" - FILMS & FILMING

"Roeg deploys subtle means of direction and Hitchcockian misdirection... All the leading performances are striking... A powerful and dazzling visual texture" - MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

"Stylistically beautiful thriller... haunting visual quality... the eeriness of Venice in winter is magnificently captured and Sutherland and Christie are extremely good" - MOVIES ON TV

"... an engrossing psychological horror... It's the psychic themes and imagery are fascinating" - REVENGE OF THE CREATURE FEATURE GUIDE

"... broodingly atmospheric... all is resolved in a chilling climax" - ELLIOT'S GUIDE TO FILMS ON VIDEO

The Bad:

"A pretentious and puzzling piece of high cinema art... too brilliant in surface detail to be dismissed... it has to be seen to be appreciated" - HALLWELL'S FILM GUIDE

"... begins brilliantly but loses its compulsive thread in a maze of gloomy canals" - PHOTOPLAY

"Critically overrated, the film is confused and pretentious... only the photography and locations are memorable" - ALAN FRANK'S HORROR FILM HANDBOOK

"... mysterious occurrences through the canals of Venice (lead) to a confused ending" - THE PSYCHOTRONIC ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FILM (oh, Michael)

And The Ugly:

"The psycho-thriller... keeps attracting one artist after another... now we have Nicolas Roeg's DON'T LOOK NOW" - a stylist, but irritatingly postured exercise in tail-chasing... Why the confusion? Blame director Roeg who... has edited himself out of what might have been, if nothing else, a fine mood piece.

Sutherland and Christie try hard, but most of the time, they simply look uncomfortable... Christie in particular comes off flatly...

We, the audience, are left to ponder the significance of pat religious metaphors which have lent time store apocalypses to many a thin film playing dressing up.

The horror film does not need movies edited so dynamically that they come apart at the seams. Most of all, the genre can do without filmmakers who value intellectual process over dramatic reality - particularly when the intellectual process leads the viewer to confuse superficial emptiness with the transcendental kind. Artists have dragged popular art into holes like this before: if the horror film has to go, let's hope someone else does the dragging besides a Nicolas Roeg" - Harry Ringel (take a bow), CINEFANTASTIQUE



by David Hopkins

The sound of the front door slamming told Mrs. Righton that her son, Martin, was home from school. She was in the process of getting up out of her chair when the door to the living-room opened, and Martin entered, his face red, a look of undisguised hatred painted onto his features. He threw his schoolbag to the floor and stood staring at it for a moment, his chest heaving. Mrs. Righton edged past him and went to the kitchen.

"That stupid cow didn't like it! She didn't bloody like it!" Martin had followed his mother into the kitchen and glowered at her as she poured him a cup of tea. "That bloody art teacher said it was no good! No good! Can you believe it?"

"Which one didn't she like, dear?"

"Tabby."

"That collage? But I liked it, love," Mrs. Righton offered him a cautious smile.

"But you don't pass art students, do you?" Martin snapped back at his mother, as though her attempted sympathy had been flayed with biting sarcasm. "A lovely cat. Very life-like," she said, 'but not enough of your own personality in it, Martin! That's what she said. Stupid cow.' He stopped blushing. "I'm sorry, mom. I'm just a bit upset. You know how much effort I put into that picture to get it right."

Mrs. Righton walked over to where her son stood and gave him a mug of steaming tea. Without a word, she took him by the arm and led him up to his bedroom.

"It's just a little something out of the money your father left," she explained as they stood outside the door. Martin blushed again.

"Now, you shouldn't have that money for necessities — food and bills. You shouldn't have spent it on me."

"I didn't spend that much, Martin. We've still got enough to pay the bills. And I'll see that we don't starve. You'll see that we don't starve!" she laughed. "I know how much your art means to you. Your dad would have wanted you to have it. And he would have left more, if he'd been able to, but... Young people need an interest nowadays, or else they turn to crime to stay sane." She looked at her son, and he saw a lump in her throat. "Please stay sane — for both our sakes."

Martin threw his arms around his mother and buried his head in her chest. They clung onto each other for a few minutes, before pulling back and wiping her eyes.

"Well, are you going to look at it?" Martin opened the door of his bedroom.

Sitting behind the new drawing-board, Martin quickly mapped out the outline of his mother. The latest project set in the exam syllabus was a portrait of either parent, and, since his father had died a month earlier, Martin had no choice. It had to be his mother.

"Sit still, please," he pleaded, shaking his head if one of the strokes of his pencil went astray. "I can't draw you if you don't keep still."

Mrs. Righton looked pained.

"I'm sorry, Martin. It's just that I'm not used to sitting still for such long periods of time. My back's beginning to hurt a bit." She stretched, and Martin cursed under his breath.

"Mother, sit STILL!"

"Sorry, dear." She relaxed into her set pose and apologized again.

Two hours later, Martin threw down his pencil in exasperation.

"It's no good. You don't sit still for long enough. The slightest movement throws me out."

Mrs. Righton sat in silence opposite her own son.

The next day, as his mother was making the Sunday dinner, Martin had an idea for getting his mother to sit still long enough for him to draw her. She had just served the roast potatoes onto the plates and, as she went to the cooker to get the chicken out of the oven, Martin picked up a non-stick frying pan and silently and efficiently smashed it down onto her head. She crumpled, and the chicken jumped out of its dish like a bloated ballerina as Mrs. Righton fell and landed with a thump on the floor. Martin idly plucked off a piece of hot meat and popped it into his mouth while he considered how he was going to get her upstairs and into his bedroom.

Not wanting to work on an empty stomach, and with the smell of the cooked chicken hanging seductively on the air, he picked it up, wiped it over with a damp cloth and began devouring the poor animal.

"Right mother. Don't move a muscle."

He had managed to drag her lifeless form up the stairs without too much difficulty (somehow, she'd gotten one of her hands stuck in the rails of the banister and, before he'd had time to notice it, her wrist snapped as he pulled her up. As he didn't have to paint her hands, he wasn't too upset). She now sat in the chair opposite his drawing-board, her eyes staring forward.

"Okay, I want to start with the left side of your face, as it's your best side, so could you just... twist it slightly. Mother, twist your bloody head to the left! THE LEFT, MOTHER!" when she didn't move, Martin stood up, walked over to her and jerked her face in the desired direction.

"There. That's much better. Now, hold it right there."

"Jesus WEPT, mother! Please don't fall asleep when I'm drawing you!" He thought perhaps the muscles in her neck had turned to water after he'd hit her with the frying-pan. He told her as much.

"Christ, have you got shit in your neck, mom? Be proud. Hold your head upright. Stop being

awkward, mother. DO IT!" Silence.

"Oh, hell!"

Martin quickly opened his bedroom door and ran downstairs. He found the keys to the garage hanging from a hook next to the back door. Inside the garage, Martin had trouble finding what he'd gone in there for. Since his father had died, mother hadn't had time (or so she kept saying) to tidy the mess, and just dumped anything else in there whenever she wanted to put it out of mind.

"Out of sight — in the bloody garage!" Martin laughed at his own wit. He scrambled over a dirty lawn-mower, a pair of garden shears and a box of Christmas decorations, until he finally found the camping gear that his father had been so fond of talking about but never actually using. Martin gathered everything together, including a hammer he thought might come in useful, and went back inside and up to his room.

"Do you have to be such a pain in the neck, mother? If you can't keep your head upright, there's only one thing to do." He had positioned her in the corner of the room, and she sat perched on the stool like a dead bugle. He steadied himself, pulled back the hammer, and brought it forward onto the head of the iron tent pole that was horizontal in front of his mother's neck. It entered her with a macabre grace, but he had to hit it again before it lapsed itself in the joint of the intersecting walls. A few flakes of paint were knocked off, but could he could touch it up later. Martin decided to give it another solid hit for good measure, then he went to the bathroom to wash off the rivers of blood that had squirted all over him as the pole tore into her flesh.

He dried himself off and went back to his room to carry on with the preliminary sketches.

It was a week later, with his bedroom beginning to smell like a slaughterhouse, that he finally came to mixing the colours for the painting.

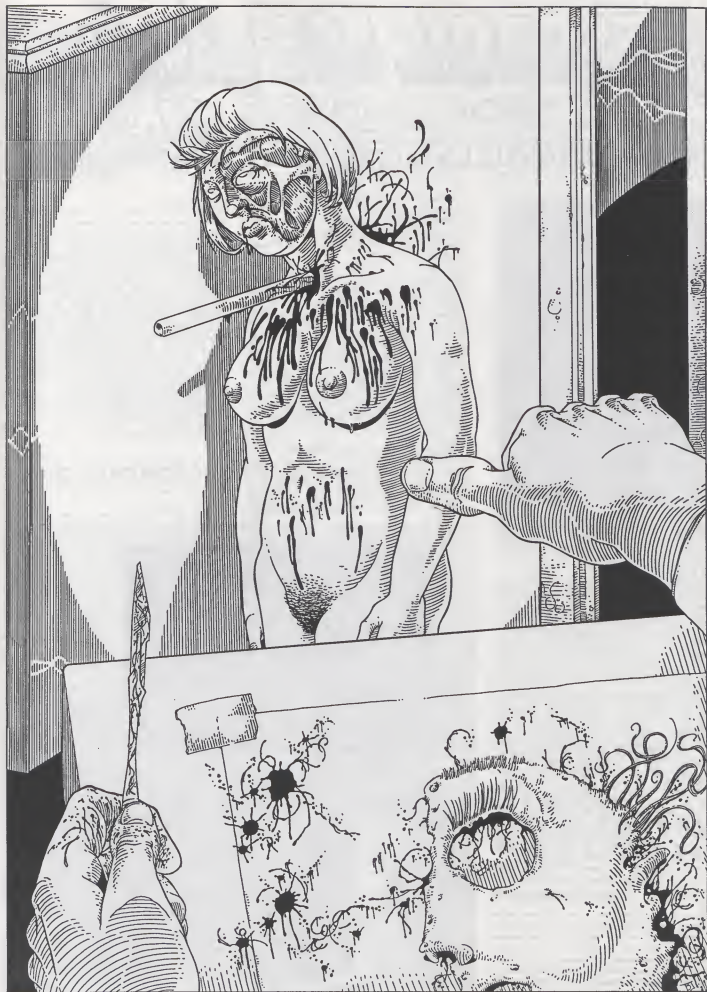
Mrs. Righton was sitting patiently in the corner, the iron pole poking from out of her neck. Martin had made her a cup of tea and cut her a slice of stale cake, just in case she wanted a drink and something to eat while he was working.

"Mummy? Did you know that you've got a very strange skin tone?"

Martin spent the rest of that day, and the two days following, trying to mix the exact flesh colour for his mother's portrait.

At eight o'clock in the evening, he gave up, decided to make it a collage, and went into the garage to fetch the garden shears. Just like he'd done with Tabby.

The End



MESOZOIC AGE INVASION

OR HAVING A COMPLETE SET OF DINOSAURS ATTACK CARDS.



The existence of 'Dinosaur Attack!' bubblegum cards isn't completely unknown to most horror fans as they have had coverage in genre magazines like Michael Weldon's 'Psychotronic Video' and 'Fangoria'. However, collecting a full set of them is a quite a task!

I managed to pick up my first packet in Forbidden Planet in early '89 just out of curiosity. The price was 25p and for this you got 5 cards, 1 sticker and a piece of gum. I then managed to pick up some more in Birmingham's Nostalgia & Comics, but like Forbidden Planet, they sold out amazingly fast! Luckily a friend in the States (to whom I'm eternally grateful) supplied me with stacks of packets and I'm now the proud owner of a full set!

The Topps Company Inc are responsible for these magnificent cards and I would highly recommend them to any fans of Dinosaurs and gore, and people with a very dark sense of humour (I belong to all three categories by the way). The artwork is very reminiscent of the old EC horror comics and each card is extremely detailed and colourful.

The 55 cards (and 11 stickers) tell the complete story of Dr Elias Thorne's invention, The Time Scanner. It's a first working demonstration was aboard the space station Prometheus. They set the machine up to look into the Earth's past and, in particular, the Mesozoic Age, to discover the reason why the dinosaurs became extinct.

All does not go well and shortly after the start of the experiment a series of explosions occur with Dr Thorne assuring that everything is okay...

Down on Earth things are quite different with dinosaurs appearing right out of thin air throughout the entire world with death and destruction following in their wake! The tabloid press keep everyone informed with their sensational headlines... 'D.C. HOLOCAUST', 'CRUSHING A CANINE', 'BLUE WATER, SAVAGE DEATH' and 'LUNCHBREAK!'! Yes, not even The Whitehouse,

men's best friend and a school bus are safe from these monsters!

Baseball stadiums, a rock concert, the city zoo, a wrestling ring and, oh no, even the set of the latest 'GADZOOK!' film in Tokyo all fall under the attack.

There are of course lots of heroic acts from certain individuals; card 32 depicts an old lady blasting away at a dinosaur with a shotgun because she just couldn't leave her cats, telling reporters that "I couldn't leave them to those oversized lizards!"

While all hell is breaking loose on Earth Dr Thorne works hard at trying to reverse the experiment and send the dinosaurs back to their own time. While taking a quick nap he has a peculiar dream in which he is visited by a humanoid dinosaur which calls itself a Saurian. The Saurian tells him that the dinosaurs have a powerful presence watching over them and that it wants the dinosaurs to stay and conquer the Earth...

Before Thorne can activate the sequence that will send the dinosaurs back he is picked up and pulled through the time scanner by a large scaly hand and brought face to face with the presence, 'The Supreme Monstrosity'! Now, Thorne's assistant, Helen, must activate the sequence and

save the world...

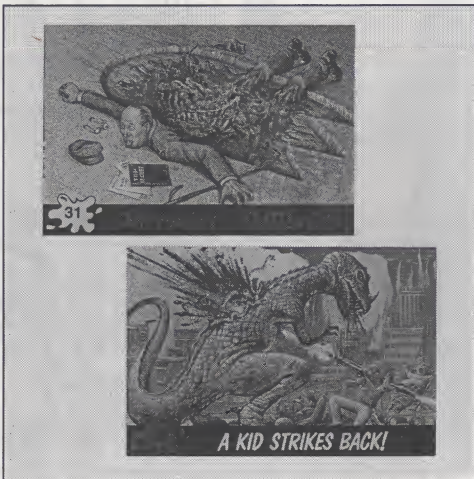
Interesting stuff eh? I've just got enough space to tell you about the 11 stickers, each one goes into details of a particular dinosaur giving all manner of educational information.

Highly recommended but don't despair if you haven't got a set! Here's your chance to win one of your very own in our 'Dinosaurs Attack!' competition! We would like you to do two things: firstly, name the author whose novel about genetically engineered dinosaurs was named by 'The Times' as 'appalling nastiness!'; and secondly, compile a list of as many films as you can think of that have dinosaurs featured in them, the longest (and most correct) list received by the closing date will win. Sorry but we've only got one set to give away.

Mark your envelope 'DA COMP' and send it along to the editorial address (don't forget to include your own name and address!).

STEFAN KWIATKOWSKI.

CLOSING DATE : 31/1/91



Binfords Studio REVIEWS

THE ABYSS (1989)

CBS/Fox.
Directed by James Cameron.
134 mins.

Staggeringly good for over two hours and then almost coming off the rails in the last fifteen minutes, *THE ABYSS* may not have been a major commercial success but it looks set to become one of the eighties' biggest cult hits.

Over two years in the making and costing \$54m it stands head and shoulders above other underwater movies that surfaced around the same time and conclusively confirms James Cameron's position as the finest action director around, containing his best work to date even if, overall, it isn't quite as satisfying a viewing experience as his other classics *THE TERMINATOR* and *ALIENS*; and with much of the underwater action and dialogue filmed 'live' plus a plethora of groundbreaking special effects it stands as a remarkable physical and technical achievement, fully deserving of four Oscar nominations it received (winning for SFX).

These technical achievements are matched by two remarkable performances from the two leads, with Ed Harris outstanding as 'Bud' Brigman, the group leader, while Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio as his estranged wife Lindsey gives one of the finest female performances ever to grace fantasy cinema; whether venting her anger on Coffey and his men, staring in wonder at the NTI's (Non-Terrestrial Intelligence), or strapping away the cast-iron bitch to reveal her true feelings to Bud as he drops into the abyss, she is flawless, even making that dodgy speech to Bud - the first sign of a leak in the script - far more convincing than perhaps it deserved to be (and would a real cast-iron bitch ever admit to being such? Answers on a defaced Poll Tax Form to Mo'Id Downing Street, London W1). Cameron regular Michael Biehn is also effective in the more limited role of S.E.A.L. leader Coffey and the minor players do well simply not to get lost among the stunning

effects and spectacular sets, while the whole cast (and crew) deserve credit just for the hardships they endured filming underwater.

It would be doing the film a disservice to try and give a brief summary of the plot but suffice to say it's a tense and gripping thriller with too many high points to list them all. Like *THE TERMINATOR* and *ALIENS* each peak is followed by another and then another until you think it can't get any better, and there's the rub, for in a way it does peak too early; there's nothing particularly bad about the ending it just doesn't reach the emotive highs of previous scenes and so the film just seems to peter out.

THE ABYSS probably peaks with the thrilling dog-fight between Bud and Lindsey in Cab One and Coffey in Flatbed and this scene's dramatic and moving aftermath. Other incredible highs include the opening scenes in the doomed sub; the crew's frantic attempts to limit the damage as Despoore starts to take in water; the eerie exploration of the sunken sub; the fluid-breathing rat, no tricks, a genuine fluid-breathing rat, and leaving aside the morality of this - "She's doing it! she ain't diggin' it!!" - it is an amazing sight (and when it comes to a human's turn to do it it's sold on the great line of "We all breathe liquid for nine months, your body will remember"); Bud's desperate efforts to stop Coffey launching a nuclear warhead at the NTI's... to name just a few. And then there's my favourite: the NTI's demonstration of their mastery of water by forming a pseudopod (animated water funnel) that explores Despoore; a wondrous creation that left me awestruck (and again the acting, especially from Ms. Mastrantonio, makes the scene work and adds to the effect) - the NTI's also show their power in a scene filmed but not used in the final version when they form giant tidal waves poised over major coastal cities as world tension escalates. Apparently these scenes were dropped not because of the thaw in the Cold War that coincided with the making of the film but simply to give it a more manageable running time. This part of the story is still present in Orson Scott Card's excellent novelisation of the film (Legend Books, £3.99) along with chapters giving plenty of background information on the early years of Bud, Lindsey and Coffey.

So to that ending, there's nothing intrinsically wrong with it (how would you have ended it?) It's just that it's anti-climatic and so leaves the viewer feeling slightly let down and this probably accounts for the mixed reviews the film received ('Empire' even gave separate ratings for the first three quarters of the film and the last quarter) but it's really not a major flaw and shouldn't deter anyone from seeing the film; and when you do you'll wish you'd seen it on the

BIG screen where it belongs as, inevitably, it does lose something on the small screen (again, not enough to put off new viewers as the stifling claustrophobia of many scenes is still intact and intense on any size screen) - and even if you don't like Cameron's conclusion he should at least be praised for keeping it clear, unlike 2001, a film it brings to mind on several occasions (in scope, ambition and technical virtuosity), which opted for a critic-proof enigmatic ending.

So despite some flaws *THE ABYSS* generates more than enough interest and excitement to make it the most essential video release of the year so far. It'll certainly do until the day, as rumours suggest, we get to see Cameron's full length three and a half hour version! Roger to that.

MARK MURDIN.

AFTER MIDNIGHT (1989)

MO/UA Home Video.
Directed by Ken & Jim Wheat.
69 mins.

Allison (Jillien McWhirter) begins a new class with a degree of uncertainty - she enrolls in Professor Edward Derek's 'The Psychology Of Fear'.

Professor Derek (Razzy Zade) has rather unusual teaching methods and gives a warning to his students, "...to understand fear, you have to experience fear!" and then he proceeds to threaten one of the boys with a pistol jammed up against his head as the poor chap said that nothing scared him - he pees his pants and leaves but not before reporting the incident to the college Dean.

The Dean banishes the Professor from using his unorthodox methods, but he offers his pupils private 'fear' tuition at his house after school. The kids all arrive at his home and start relating their own tales of fear...

The first tale involves a courting couple who breakdown in the middle of nowhere and take refuge in a sinister looking house with a sinister history - five people were killed there, their heads and hands removed by hedge clippers!

Tale two features four young girls who are out for a good time in daddy's car but run out of petrol in a bad part of town. They then get into some serious shit when a scum-sucking low-life and his pack of killer dogs get hold of them.

The next story sees a girl with a broken leg left all alone as she mans a late night phone answering service. She starts to get bugged by a sleazo who calls over and over again.

It is then time for Allison to tell her story which she says will involve all of them...

An interesting little addition to the old anthology cycle that, although slow at times, works quite well in most scenes. The directing team of Ken & Jim Wheat are on the right track and I'm fairly sure that in time they'll turn out some really good genre pieces (they also co-wrote *THE FLY II* & *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET IV*).

The effects are reasonable, the best being a semi-entire axe-wielding skeleton and a desecration scene, but generally it could have benefited from some additional gore.

The first segment works well but it's ending was telegraphed far too early. Segment two is probably the nastiest and the third, although clichéd, generated the most suspense.

Nothing really special on show but it still manages to entertain.

PAUL J. BROWN.

AFTERSHOCK (1989)

Modus.
Directed by Frank Harris.
88 mins.

A post nuke vision set in a ravaged world with groups of intermediate armies wielding the big stick over small groups of renegade freedom fighters. Into all of this arrives Sabine, an



alien female visitor, who having digested information from one of our old deep space probes has come to our world to see if she can pick up some tips to save her. But since the probe was sent up the Earth has undergone some BIG changes and is no longer the peaceful(?) place it once was.

One group of soldier types, lead by an evil man called Quinn, discover the alien and want to interrogate her. She flees from them and joins up with a band of resistance fighters who agree to help her get home on through the 'energy cycle'. But Quinn has employed the resources of an 'apprentice' to help him...

I know, we've seen it all before, but this has got a few things going for it, one being a familiar cast that features a few stalwart types with parts being taken by Michael Beck (lookalike Jay Roberts Jr., Elizabeth Kalfas as the 'ET' (an attractive bonus and she also manages to inject a bit of humour in a SPLASH flash out of water way, having to adapt to a new language and culture), Christopher Mitchum as a one-armed Colonel, John Saxon as a sadistic 'Central Control Information Bureau' heavy, the weird Michael Berryman as a psycho gang member, and you can also see the likes of Richard Lynch, James Lew and Russ Tamblyn (there's also an irritating guy who thinks he's Eddie Murphy!).

The action comes fairly thick and fast and for a '51' certificate it's quite brutal, with lots of martial arts and some lively stunts. The sets are it's weakest point with the whole film being shot at an old steel works and a paper mill! Look out for the side-splitting scene where the only form of assistance that the Earth can offer Sabine's home planet is in a copy of the booklet detailing 'The Constitution Of The United States of America'!!!

It's not quite sure what it wants to be but it is interesting to look at for 75% of the running time. Nothing really outstanding ever happens but it's still worth a rental fee if your first choice is out on loan.

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE ANGRY RED PLANET (1960)

ABC/Columbia.

Directed by Ib Melchior.
80 mins.

A crew of four - Colonel Tom O'Benlon (Gerald Mohr), Dr. Iris Ryan (Nora Hayden), Professor Theodore Goffel (Les Tremayne) and Varrant Officer Sam Jacobs (Jack Kruschen) - take off in a rocket for the first manned mission to Mars. The flight goes very well and on the 47th day of the mission they touch down on the red planet surface. As they prepare for their first walk outside Iris spots a strange looking creature peering in through the porthole. Of course, no one believes her and they all trek off onto the Martian landscape.

It's not long before Iris gets in some bother and gets herself tangled up in a giant Venus (or should be Mars) Fly-Trap plant and the others have to come to her rescue. The Professor gets the feeling that they are all being watched and they also discover that radio contact has been lost with the Earth. But, they are not deterred and agree to stay on Mars for the full planned five days.

A new day begins and they all trek outside once more and good old Iris starts to hack away at what she thinks is a new form of plant-life but it turns out to be the leg of a giant rat-like creature that they now have to fight off! After this further mishap they decide that perhaps cutting their visit short isn't such a bad idea after all and they prepare to leave, but some strange force prevents the ship from taking off...

AIP at it's weakest; each crew member is one of the usual stereotypes - the always serious Professor, the dim radio operator who thinks he's driving a truck, the trying to be serious but still wanting to be den mother female (she even

carries her damn handbag around on the ship!), and the Colonel who thinks he's asking a western or a WWII flick! (There's even a stupid on-board romance between the Colonel and Iris that defies belief!); the monsters are in a league all of their own as far as stupidity is concerned - three-eyed humenoids (actually paintings!), a giant anoebe and that ridiculous giant stuffed rat with bulbous eyes and stuck on Preying-Mantis legs (it's not kidding, honest!!!)

A truly spaced out pic with trip inducing photography (check out that crazy looking red painted scenery viewed through red filters!) that when mixed with the mindless dialogue, the hokey acting and appalling ideas make a rather enjoyable eighty minute worth of tacky pulp-style adventure. Weird and wonderful stuff (the opening credits don't appear until after the film has finished!) that lovers of grade Z movies will lap up!
PAUL J. BROWN.

ARENA (1988)

Entertainment In Video.
Directed by Peter Manoogian.
95 mins.

Imagine how ROCKY 25 might look and this is what you have here!

The year is 4038, the place is space and a huge floating space-station is the setting for the Universe's greatest entertainment, ARENA!

No man has won the title for over 50 years and Steve Armstrong has his heart set on it. He works at the station as a short-order cook and after defending his four-armed boss in a fight he gets himself fired. The alien that he beat up in the restaurant turned out to be an arena fighter and as a result he gets offered a fighting contract. He does well and gradually gets a crack at the title, currently held by a bad news alien called Horn.

A likeable tale of futuristic fistfights that works, mainly because it doesn't take it's self too seriously.

The make-up and creatures are handled by the always reliable John Buehler (RE-ANIMATOR) and the brilliant Screaming Mad George (SOCIETY) who together have pulled out all the stops to come up with loads of alien designs as the whole film is like an overblown STAR WARS 'cantina' scene!

The leading role is taken by Paul Satterfield, who unfortunately hasn't the acting ability to develop the character enough, but he is a likeable sort of chap and he'll have you rootin' for him in the Arena.

Produced for Charles Band's Empire Pictures by Irvin (HALLOWEEN) Yablans this is an ideal film for those who don't like their fantasy fodder on the demanding side.

Trivia point: STAR TREK had an episode called

'Arena' way back in the sixties in which Captain Kirk had to do battle with an alien called 'Gorn'!! Coincidence or what?!!
PAUL J. BROWN.

BAD DREAMS (1988)

CBS/Fox.
Directed by Andrew Fleming.
81 mins.

As a member of a hippie-type group called 'Unity Fields' Cynthia (Jennifer A. NIGHMARE ON ELM STREET 3 Rubin) is the only survivor of a mass suicide pact instigated by the group's leader Harris (Richard THE SAVED AND THE SORROWED Lynch). ('If I killed you, it's because I love you'). This all happened over 13 years ago and Cynthia has only just awoken from a coma as a result of the experience.

She is installed at a hospital Borderline Personality Group to try and make her adjustment to the new timeslot as easy as possible. But the other members of the group are all unbalanced individuals which makes Cynthia feel out of place for starters.

After a while Cynthia decides that it is time to leave, but when she gets stuck in a crowded elevator she has terrible visions of Harris, who is begging for her to join her old friends. His face alternates from his usual scared and pitted look to hideously burned flesh.

The actual suicide was never proved, as there were no witnesses, but in a therapy session Cynthia relives the whole horrific event and tells the others how Harris baptised his flock in petrol before torching them all. The doctors call in the police but they suspect Cynthia for the cause of the fire as she was never burned.

Harris appears for Cynthia again and warns her that if she doesn't kill herself and re-join 'Unity' then he will have to take someone else in her place.

Lena, a repressed unhappy member of the group, gets rejected by Cynthia when she attempts to make a friend - Cynthia then 'sees' Harris drowning the poor girl - Lena dies in the hospital awaiting pool.

A smaller thing then happens to one of the other patients.

Cynthia tells the group that Harris is carrying out the killings, but Dr. Karson (Bruce RE-ANIMATOR Abbott) says 'no way'!

But when more and more grisly deaths occur Dr. Karson has no choice but to believe his patient. Cynthia however is slowly succumbing to Harris' wishes...

A really good blood-soaked chiller (only slightly tamed) with a wealth of genre talent both in front of and behind the cameras who together have created an intelligent horror vehicle that delivers both shocks and character.



It is very ELM STREET (especially PART 3 with it's therapy sessions and by having Jennifer Rubin in it), but getting away from that aspect and viewing it on it's own surreal merits, it's very effective and is a well executed dream variant that should do lots of business at video stores.

Actor Richard Lynch deserves a special mention as the very chilling dream-stalking killer whose menacing presence easily puts the tired likes of Freddy in the shade.

The direction is pretty slick and my hat tips to Andrew Fleming as this is his first film after graduating from New York University Film School, but he had a good guide in the shape of producer Gale Anne Hurd, whose list of credits should be well known to fantasy fans (and she may have helped him somewhat?)

BAD DREAMS is good enough to put most 'nightmares' to sleep!
PAUL J. BROWN.

BASKET CASE 2 (1990)

Hedusa Pictures.

Directed by Frank Henenlotter.
90 mins.

I won't bother to brief you on the 1982 original as it's positive that you all know and love it to death, but if for some strange reason it has escaped you then I suggest that you seek it out in any form that is available to hand, pronto! BASKET CASE 2 commences with a reprisal of the ending from the first outing with the twisted Bradley twins hanging atop a building in Times Square and then plummeting to the ground below. Instead of dying as we all thought before, Duane (the normalish one) and Beilal (the one-armed rugby ball) are just injured and are taken to the local hospital for treatment.

The news is now out and all the TV channels are talking about the Bradley freaks.

In the hospital they are put under close watch, reporters are eager to get the story of the century. Meanwhile, back at the bedside, Beilal's eyes glimmer to life and he takes telepathic control of Duane. They kill a hospital employee and hobble out of the building (Duane's leg is in plaster) and get 'rescued' by Granny Ruth (Annie Ross), a spinster doctor who knew Duane's parents, and Susan (Heather Rattray), her granddaughter, who whisk them away in the back of a van to a big old isolated house.

Granny and Susan nurse Duane back to health and get themselves acquainted with Beilal (they even provide him with a nice new wicker basket!).

But it seems that the Bradley's are not the only residents at Granny Ruth's house - she was once known as 'Dr Freak' and has used her home as a sanctuary for hideously deformed freaks from around the world. She introduces the newcomers to the others: people like Worm Man, Wuse Face, Half Moon, Frog Boy, Toothy, Pitzhead, a man with 27 noses, a giant head that sings opera and many others including Eve, who is a female version of Beilal!!!

A real sizzle-rag of a newspaper puts out a \$1,000,000 reward for the whereabouts of the Bradley's and a keen reporter, Marcie Elliott (Kathryn Malsie), is sent out to investigate.

A freakshow rip-off merchant claims to have Beilal as one of his star attractions and Marcie makes the old geezer her first port of call. But



before she gets there Granny Ruth pops in and lets her feelings be known to him and then gets Beilal to teach him a lesson and he gets added to his own exhibit!

Back at the house Granny gives Beilal a spot of therapy and Duane, now sporting a new hairstyle, tries to adjust to life among the freaks. Duane talks to Susan about the possibility of them running away together, but she says that she is one of them and that she belongs there and cannot leave. Duane then lets his feelings be known to Beilal, who just laughs at his ideas.

Beilal is happy staying with Granny and the others.

Marcie gets to hear about 'Dr Freak' and pays Granny a visit and happens to stumble upon Duane. Duane says that he should leave, but leaving will lead to the discovery of the others which he cannot allow to happen, so he agrees to stay and fight....

BASKET CASE 2 is an over-the-top rollercoaster ride, but as with the two EVIL DEAD movies it has had a lot of it's original excesses toned down, and because of the increase in budget it has lost a lot of it's crudeness which made it so endearing in the first place. Most of the mayhem occurs either badly lit or is off-camera making you feel a bit cheated but there is still a lot of good stuff to keep the average splatter-freak amused for an hour and a half; on show are some face ripping and twisting, some effective flesh needlework and an ALIEN inspired chest-buster! Sadly, with more cash available, Beilal's appearance (created by Gabe Bartalos who helped on the original) has not been improved upon and he only looks his best when seen with a man's head pressed into the appliance at close-up, he appears more phoney than before, but hey, what am I going on about, as his can't help liking the little critter and his wicked ways. He also features in the best shot of the movie; the sight of him and his little 'girlfriend', Eve, screwing themselves silly has to go down in the annals of motion picture history as one of the weirdest love scenes on film (but of course if you know otherwise, let me know!).

The film is also hampered by the other freaks, who have been given very exaggerated make-ups and appearances which completely removes any glimmer of sympathy that director Henenlotter had maybe intended. But then again, the whole movie is not meant to be viewed as a serious debate on the treatment of mis-shapen outcasts in society and should therefore not be taken seriously and should be enjoyed and savoured on the level that it is aimed at.

Henenlotter has learned a lot since the 1982 original (and the wonderful BRAIN DAMAGE) and has developed some interesting camera skills and ideas, there is one scene where a photographer gets his come-uppance at the hands of the freaks and the whole shot is lit only by the rapid flashing of his camera, this gives the scene a genuine feel of terror as well as an eerie strobing effect.

The acting is good solid B movie stuff and Kevin Van Hentenryck is given the support he needs, all of the players doing well, Ted (FROM BEYOND) Sorel is especially good as the seedy cop on the case, and they seem to believe in their subject.

Not exactly a modern day FREAKS but an enjoyable twisted shock-fest that is bolstered by a terrific ending that had me in stitches, and needless to say, after all my earlier gripes, I'm still looking forward to the planned BASKET CASE 3 which is boldly announced on screen at the end.

PAUL J. BROWN.

BILL AND TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE (1989)

Castle Pictures.

Directed by Stephen Herek.
86 mins.

School-boys Bill (Keanu Reeves) and Ted (Alex Winter), two would be rock stars ('The Wild Stallions') are about to flunk history (they think

that Napoleon is/was just a "short dead dude" etc), and if they flunk history they also get thrown out of school - it's worse for Bill as he will get sent to military academy by his cop dad - they need help, especially as their passing history is very important for the future of the Earth! Enter Rufus (George Carlin), a hip dude from the future, who zooms through time in a phone box (no, it's not the TARDIS!) to offer them assistance.

Rufus appears and whisks them away on the 'circuits of history' - "woooah, dude!!!" - and they step out of the call box in 19th Century Austria where they capture Napoleon for research and bring him forwards in time to the present.

Rufus has to go but before leaving he gives them instructions for using the booth and it's time travelling yellow pages - they must not fall history!

In order to get the 'A's' required Bill and Ted decide to visit different timescales so that they can 'borrow' historical personages which will enable them to give the 'most excellent' presentation of all time.

Their next port of call is the Old West, where they assist Billy The Kid before whisking him away in the direction of Ancient Greece and Socrates!

The four of them then arrive in 15th Century England - Billy The Kid has already started to pick up Bill and Ted's 'dude-ese' speak, which is a kind of hip, yuppie, Loyd 'Through The Keyhole' Grossman type drawl - they attempt to see King Henry but get side-tracked by two beautiful English 'babes' (actually princesses) which in turn gets them into big trouble with the 'Royal ugly dudes'. They manage to escape and shoot forward in time to 2688 where they enlighten 'The Three Most Important People In The World' with their philosophies - 'Party On Dudes' and 'Be Excellent To Each Other!!!'

Without a moment to lose they are off again and quickly manage to 'back' Sigmund Freud (known by Bill and Ted as 'Frude Dude!'), Beethoven, Joan Of Arc, Genghis Kahn and Abraham Lincoln! they also manage to meet themselves a couple of times! With them all sardined into the phone box they travel forwards to the day of the history examination and plan to unleash upon the school a presentation that will guarantee them an 'A's'.

A 'most excellent' picture if ever I saw one. It's highly original, has a first rate cast, is damn funny with it's dialogue rolling like a dream, sports a good rock based soundtrack, state of the art computer animated effects, is keyed in to today's kids and more importantly it is one of those rare films that has lasting charisma and I don't think I could live of it after repeated viewings!

The casting of Keanu (RIVER'S EDGE) Reeves as Bill and Alex (THE LAST BOYS) Winter as Ted must have been sheer ecstasy for director Stephen (CRITTERS) Herek as they are both a visual and aural treat and are both so likeable that they just grow on you. If I had to pick a favourite though I would have to plump for Keanu Reeves, his performance alone is probably why the film did so well theatrically, he is very natural and 'most' amusing!

The script (by Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon) is pure heaven and it slips the heroes in and out of time as easily as a witch with greasy hands (woooah! I've even started philosophising myself now!) you can really do nothing more than sit back and enjoy it. I can't wait for the sequel!

PAUL J. BROWN.

BLACK RAINBOW (1989)

Palace Premiere.

Directed by Mike Hodges.
100 mins.

Rosanne Arquette is Martha Travis, a travelling clairvoyant ('The courier to your loved ones'), who moves around the USA with Walter (Jason Roberts) her hard-drinking manipulative father, spending a couple of days in each town giving



Rosanna Arquette's acting ability is brought to the fore as the beautiful yet tortured psychic in a no-holds-barred barrage of raw talent that will stay with you long after viewing.

She is ably assisted in the acting stakes by the ever dedicated Jason Robards, who is always worth watching, and from Tom Hulce as the roving reporter who really digs his teeth into the part. Directed and written by Mike Hodges who can at last be forgiven by genre fans for bringing FLASH GORDON to our screens as BLACK RAINBOW more than makes up for it.

Anyone with a penchant for the supernatural will lap it up and those of you who are sceptical may alt up and take notice it's a great shame that it didn't get a bigger theatrical push but it should be a winner on video - a big plus for the video is the artfully produced sleeve.

I will predict your viewing future with this one - hire it and you will not be disappointed! PAUL J. BROWN.

CHAINED HEAT (1983)

Warner Home Video.

Directed by Paul Nicolas.

92 mins.

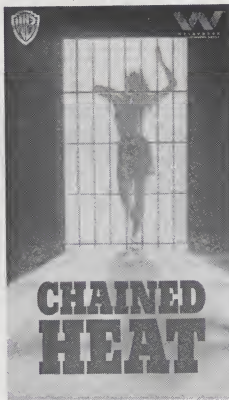
A seedy, sordid and sorry tale about an Innocent girl who is wrongly locked up in a hell-hole place known as a women's prison.

Linda Blair plays the wronged one and is subjected to every kind of mental and physical horror as she is dumped in with all forms of female low-life that make most men's prison adventures seem like a Disney flick!

Sybil Denning is here too, playing the prison's resident toughie, leading her gals into such delights (!) as racial razor slashing and graphic throat attacks with wire and hooks - all this and scenes of lesbian breast fondling too! But wait, in this place the inmates are the good guys (gals) as the warden and guards are running every sort of vice racket you can think of and more besides!

So, in this and the girls forget about fighting among themselves and join their forces to try and topple the guards...

Very strong film with equally strong language, very violent and with a fair amount of nudity - you'll either love it or loathe it, followers of Linda Blair will find it interesting to see how she has 'developed' over the years!!



'audiences' to the 'feeling' masses that need to contact their dear departed friends and relatives (like Boris Stokes only better looking!).

Walter treats his daughters unique talent as a lucky gimmick, hell happy to just pull in the cash from the shows.

One night though things don't go according to plan - Martha tells Mrs. Curon, a woman in the audience, that her husband Tom was shot by a man wearing black gloves, the woman says that she must be mistaken because her husband is at home watching TV and gets rather distressed when Martha insists that he is dead.

Walter asks Martha to apologise, "When you get a wrong 'un, lose it" he says, "This time it was different" says Martha who eventually apologises to the lady.

Later that night Tom Curon is shot dead by a gunman's bullet, exactly how Martha had described it earlier - it transpires that Curon had worked at a chemical plant and was about to blow the whistle about the company's shoddy health and safety standards and got silenced by a paid assassin.

Reporter Gary Wallace (Tom Hulce) gets to hear about Martha the medium while carrying out his research for the murder story and he prints his findings in the local rag. This in turn pisses off the chemical plant owner who once again contracts the hit-man to eliminate Martha (who by this time has already moved on to the next town).

Wallace follows Martha and Walter and gets in with the old man by offering him the odd bottle of whisky in trade for information.

Wallace also tries to get close to Martha in the hope of finding the killer's identity (which is a whole lot easier than he imagined because Martha sleeps with a different man in each town she visits, "this way men live with me instead of to me") but she blows her attack when Wallace pops the question about the killer and tells him nothing.

Undeterred, Wallace follows them to the next show - again Martha pre-empt's a lot of deaths with her calling out the names of several people that are close to others in the audience. She becomes very distraught by all this and cancels the evening's performance.

Martha wants to quit the 'show', which is fast becoming a tortuous nightmare for her, but she is distressed to learn that her father has gambled and drunk her life savings away, "This is the real spirit world" he tells her holding up his flask.

Wallace then brings them the news that there was a major factory accident and all of the names that Martha had called out at the last sitting were in fact victims of the disaster - Walter now believes in his daughters gift, "This is not showbusiness" she tells him. Wallace agrees to keep her name out of the press if she will give him the name of Curon's killer.

Meanwhile, the assassin is home in...

A very gripping psychic detective thriller that will keep your attention right until it's very end (which David Lynch fans will adore). This is superior intelligent horror with a cast worthy of merit points.

Look out for John Vernon as the incredibly pery varden and for Tamsa Dobson (who I hadn't seen since CLEOPATRA JONES, a seventies blaxploitation pic that appeared on a double bill with ENTER THE DRAGON).

Quite surprisingly this is available on Warner sell-thru at £9.99, a curious item and definitely a real horror story in every sense of the word. PAUL J. BROWN.

CLASS OF 1999 (1989)

Vestron Video.

Directed by Mark L. Lester.

92 mins.

A quite superb sequel to Lester's own grueling exploitationer from 1982, CLASS OF 1984. It gets off to a good start by borrowing heavily from ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK with computer generated graphics giving us the low-down on the current situation in America - "In 1992 there were 545,767 violent incidents in American High Schools...in some cities the areas around the schools were beginning to fall under the control of violent youth gangs...by 1997 the violent incidents had tripled...gangs have taken control of large sections of big cities, some schools have been shut down...these areas are now known as Free Fire Zones...Police will not enter...There is no law...The Department of Educational Defence has been formed to re-open the schools and to control the gangs...", omg such a school is Kennedy High in Seattle...

The scene is set for the re-opening with the School Principal (Malcolm McDowell) and his board meeting the new teachers or artificially created educational units, 1,000,000 megabytes with optional X76 hardware for discipline! To the kids they look like Mr & Mrs average teacher but their plastic skin hides a multitude of sophisticated technology and weaponry!

Juvenile offender, Cody Culp (an excellent portrayal by Bradley Gregg), is released from prison after serving his sentence for violent school crimes and is sent back to Kennedy High on the grand re-opening day. On his Journey through the Free Fire Zone we are witness to the urban violence and utter squalor on every street corner. Along with hordes of others, Cody arrives at the school gates - "Welcome students to Kennedy High...all guns must be surrendered on entrance!!"

Dr. Bob Forrest (Stacy Keach) is in charge of the 'teachers' and they gather to assess the school and pupils by scanning with their inbuilt sensors and pull-down menus.

As the lessons get underway the chemistry 'teacher' has to prevent a mugging in his first lesson, then a classroom fight is broken up. In the history lesson with the 'teacher' having to deal out some 'corporal punishment'. Cody tries to run the straight and narrow and breaks up a playground rest attempt on the Principal's daughter, Christie (played by Treci Lin), but as a result of his good deed he gets severely beaten by the new P.E. 'teacher'!

At first the teachers seem to be doing a good job but it's not long until some of the kids start dying at the hands of the educational cyborgs, for it seems that Forrest's robots are in fact just re-programmed military killing machines and have a mission to do and they must win at all costs. It seems that the kids must call a halt to their gang violence and group together and prepare for an all-out war...

The effects are handled by Eric Allard and feature just about everything, how's this little lot grab you - neck twisting, back breaking, bullet hits, fingers rammed through a throat, a drill through a forehead (on screen!), a machine-gun going off in someone's mouth, a heart being ripped out...I could go on! The robotics are very convincing, the stunts of a very high calibre and more importantly, the kids are actually quite convincing and are not just your average teenage shit-head stereotypes.

Unfortunately, Malcolm McDowell is well under-utilised and ends up looking like a bowling ball



to pick up Travis.

The killers move in on the house and blow everyone away with precise gunfire. They take the boy with them.

All is not well with the killers though, for Mr. Cohen is calm, collected and does the 'job' only for the money whereas Mr. Tate is a certified nutcase with a completely sick mind who kills purely for pleasure! "Thirty years I work alone!" says Cohen who is plainly not happy at having a partner.

The three of them drive away on a 350 mile journey to deliver the poor boy, "Are you gonna kill me?" he asks, with Tate talking blood, death and pain in every obscene sentence uttered from his lips. Tate drives like a maniac, even making a point of running over animals ("The third tonight!") much to the disgust of Cohen who tells him to slow down.

The car radio brings Travis some good news though, his father was not killed and is doing okay in hospital, which is bad news for the killers. Upon hearing the news Tate insists on killing the boy there and then, but Cohen says that they must finish the job and deliver the boy alive.

At a suitable moment young Travis makes a very daring escape and races on foot across an amazingly busy freeway. The police later pick him up but are not able to keep him as Cohen & Tate turn up to reclaim him.

They set off again, the tension between the two killers is building to fever pitch, but luckily little Travis is clever enough to use the two men against each other. "This job is bad" says Cohen and after a while it becomes apparent that they will not all arrive at their destination, who will survive and live to tell the tale...?

Phew! What a corker. Eric Red, the man who wrote THE HITCHER, has delivered the goods again as COHEN & TATE turns out to be a slick, sick classy thriller. A kind of perverse buddy-buddy road movie with displaceable leading players (it's weird, but because of Tate's complete bastard character, it's not too hard to get on the side of the 'sane' killer, even though you find yourself thinking "he's a murderer!"). Top marks go to all the actors for pulling the whole thing off in style.

The film draws a lot of its feel from BLOOD SIMPLE as well as its slater, THE HITCHER, and if you rated those two you will not be disappointed by this. Gritty, violent, sick fun that will probably gain it a deserved cult following.

"Do you know the best thing that goes through a bug's mind when it hits the windshield?"

PAUL J. BROWN.

(even so it was quite a brilliant idea to have him as the head of an establishment coming full-circle from his roles in IF AND A CLOCKWORK ORANGE) but this is more than made up for by having people like exploitation queen Pam Grier on overload as one of the psychotic androids and Stacy Keach as Dr. Forrest who looks like he's still as high as a kite after his little 'trip' a few years back (check out that white hair and eyeballs!).

A semi-cross between ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK and THE TERMINATOR that is very off-beat, pretty bleak, has great violence, superb effects and an enjoyable cast, CLASS OF 1999 does not disappoint on any level and should be on all FANTASYNOPSIS readers' 'want to see' lists!

PAUL J. BROWN.

COHEN & TATE (1989)

Guild Home Video.
Directed by Eric Red.
82 mins.

Five year-old Travis Knight (Harley Cross) is the only witness to the shooting of a Texas mobster. The FBI now have him and his family in a 'safe' house in the middle of nowhere because the mob want to 'interview' the boy.

Enter Mr. Cohen (Roy Scheider) and Mr. Tate (Adam Baldwin), two ruthless assassins, sent by the mob



FANTASYNOPSIS

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CURSE OF THE SCREAMING DEAD (1982)

(aka. CURSE OF THE CANNIBAL CONFEDERATES)

Little Green Productions.
Directed by Tony Melanowski.
89 mins.

This unbelievably dumb and obscure gorefest from Maryland comes on like a collision of Bob Clark's 1972 CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS and PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE (1959), and is none the worse for it: either Deadhead hippy types (including a blind girl!) holidaying in the Deep South accidentally profane a Confederate cemetery and are made to pay when the ghouls come a callin' in the wee-small hours... Distasteful Play-Dough zombie make-ups are bolstered by some of the bloodiest gut-munching I've yet seen; seemingly endless disembowelings that show where the film-makers' heads were really at. Acting, dialogue and optical effects are uniformly bad, and the Living Dead on show here range from the convincingly rotted to joke-shop rejects. Watch for the scene where the dead excelsior over an off-screen supernatural lightshow that is not shown for budgetary reasons... Laugh in disbelief at the sight of a cheap plastic toy-car spattering fitfully to emulate a burning police vehicle! The ending is anti-climatic to say the least, but what the heck, so what? Short of a well known chicken dish, possibly the best thing to come out of Maryland for quite a while. Eat it up!

NIGEL BURRELL.

DOLLS (1986)

Vestron.
Directed by Stuart Gordon.
74 mins.

In a terrible storm, a family of three, and a stranded motorist plus his two female punk hitchhikers take refuge in a spooky gothic mansion owned by Gabriel and Hilary Harvelcke. Gabriel is an old dollmaker who has lots of stories to tell Judy, the little girl from the family, and Ralph, the motorist. One of the punk girls decides to steal some of the antiques that garnish the rooms and in the middle of the night she starts to help herself to the goodies. She is being watched by a bunch of dolls who come alive and stop her in her tracks. Judy also a witness to this and sees the girl being bloodily dragged away by the 'little people'. She tries to tell her father and wicked stepmother, but they get angry at yet another one of her tall stories. She tells Ralph and they decide to investigate...

One of the best attempts at gothic horror for many years - It has everything going for it: a great house; a wonderful eccentric old couple; lots of gore; a wacky cast; great script (by former FANGORIA man Ed Naha - see interview); superb camera angles and brilliant effects from John Carl Buechler!

The story runs along at a cracking pace and is masterfully timed and paced by director Stuart (RE-MINATOR) Gordon and it's a shame that it hasn't gained the same reputation of his other work.

There are some truly chilling moments such as the old woman pushing her dolls pream along the corridor in the middle of the night, the toy soldier firing squad and the sight of the hideous skeletal underbodies of the dolls themselves.

The casting of Guy Rolfe as Gabriel the dollmaker was spot on (Peter Cushing would've been even better though!) and the little girl played by Carrie Lorraine was fun to watch, she also has the best line in the film, when Gabriel asks "what's the matter, afraid of the dark?" she replies "No... afraid of what's in the dark!" - brilliant!

If you're looking for an under-a-tenner bargain, buy this, you won't regret it.

PAUL J. BROWN.

EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS (1956)

RCA/Columbia.
Directed by Fred F. Sears.
80 mins.

While driving along against a ridiculous back projection, Dr. Russell Marvin (Hugh Marlowe) and Carol (Joan Taylor), his new wife and secretary, are visited by a UFO, they try and pretend that it didn't happen but they accidentally record its sound on tape.

The doctor is actually in charge of 'Project Skyhook', which involves the launching of satellites (or 'birds' as the screen scientists call them). They launch their latest (No.11) and learn that the previous ten have been found back on Earth, burnt to a crisp! They talk to the General (who is Dr. Marvin's father-in-law) and come to the conclusion that they are being shot down. They tell the General about their UFO encounter - No.11 then comes crashing down!

They prepare to launch No.12, this time they have added TV cameras on board, but they are not needed as a UFO comes calling over the launch site and lands. The aliens come out in their robotic suits for a look round but the smart thinking military decide to blast them with their primitive weapons. The guns cannot penetrate the saucer's force-field and the aliens quite rightly retaliate by zapping the base with some space rays!

The newly-weds, who are below ground in a bunker, believe themselves to be the only survivors.

It seems that the aliens have already tried to contact Dr. Marvin in the past in the hope of preventing the Earth from continuing with its 'Skyhook' operation, but their message was, at the time, unintelligible and their warnings were ignored.

Dr. Marvin must reach the aliens but to do so he has to convince the Pentagon of his story.

Marvin receives a message from the aliens, but as he is under observation by the military and not allowed to leave the base, he has to escape in order to get to a pre-determined meeting place and have a pow-wow with the visitors.

He manages to get away and meets up with a huge ship.

It transpires that the aliens have plans to take over the Earth by turning everyone into mindless zombie-types and want to use Dr. Marvin as their negotiator - he has just 56 days to try and set up a peaceful meeting with the World's leaders or try to develop a weapon that will save mankind! It's not long before the alien fleet arrives to do business...

Run for your lives, run for your lives! Ray Harryhausen and Co. are attempting to give America and the rest of the World the shits with their vision of intergalactic warfare! Visibly shot in black and white and largely based on fifteen nightmares of UFO's with Harryhausen's destructive dynamism effects proving to be the star of the show, the climatic battle is very memorable. An amazing piece of screenwriting called into that is a must-see for lovers of this genre, with its comic dialogue that tries 'oh so hard' to be scientific and the wobbly hub-cap toy saucers at the beginning. It's pure fun and was, until this self-thru issue, a rarity, so keep watching the 'abels' and grab yourself a copy!

PAUL J. BROWN.

EMANUELLE AND THE LAST CANNIBALS (1977)

Fulvia Cinematografica S.r.l.
Directed by Joe D'Amato.
90 mins.

"This is a true story..." claims the film-makers of this celluloid drama. Yeah, and I'm Mickey Mouse. 'Jolly' Joe D'Amato is better known for his Hard Gore epics BEYOND THE DARKNESS/BURIED

ALIVE (1979), and ANTHROPHAGES/GRIFF REAPER (1980) than this apologetic turd of a film. EMANUELLE AND THE LAST CANNIBALS (AKA, TRAP THEM AND KILL THEM) is a sporadic mix of stuffily boring soft-core sex scenes (vot, no 'cou shots'...?), and graphic yet pitifully fake gore. Stir in some retarded racism, and shake well... One would think that the end result might (loosely) be labelled as 'votable'; think again! megot D'Amato drags in the indefatigable and infatigable Laura Gemelli for yet another outing, this time alongside Donald O'Brien who, a mere three years later was to star in Marino Girolami's such more enjoyable QUEEN OF THE CANNIBALS/ZOMBIE HUNTER (1980). The film opens promisingly enough, with a young female inmate of a New York mental hospital biting off a nurse's nipple; "She's a real savage!" exclaims an onlooker of this carnage. Emanuele just happens to be present of course, and with barely enough time to take in some (fake) mondo-style footage (of an African tribe decapitating and castrating two adulterers) she's off to the Marlo Grosso looking for a scoop. Pretty soon she and her companions visit they'd stayed at home; I wished they had too... When D'Amato actually spliced in a sub-Tarzan climax scene I was ready to give up, but some tacky lesbianism and even fuckler gore helped to revive my fast flagging interest.

One by one the party is strangled and killed by the spongy-mouth cannibals, most of whom look like Italian extras and who appear to suffer from some respiratory defect to judge by their heavily echoed breathing. The pory death scenes are crude and unpleasant; a nun is tied to a tree and has a nipple sliced off and eaten in front of her, before being messily gutted, and another woman is vaginally penetrated with a knife, and slit from crotch to chest. There is much slobbering over offal, with dripping intestines being veved vaguely in the direction of the cameras. By contrast, the scene where Donald O'Brien is pulled in two halves is remarkably gore-free, and pathetically achieved. Perhaps D'Amato wasn't that bothered about killing men... Just as the cannibals are about to sacrifice her erstwhile lover to their 'Goddess of the Lake' Emanuele does a nifty impression of the sold delity and rescues her, bringing the whole ferrago to a fearful end. Not one of D'Amato's better efforts by a long way, and only worth watching for its truly reprehensible violence. For forgiving viewers only.

VLADIMIR TEPEHSKY.

555 (1988)

King Video.
Directed by Velly Kor.
80 mins.

'SHOT IN BLOOD-VIVID VIDEO for your VIEWING PLEASURE!' screams the sleeve of this epic yes, I'm afraid it's yet another BLOOD FEAST variant, with a Charles Mansonque hippy cult theme these replacing H.G.Lewis's deft Egyptian loony... It ought to be as good as dismiss 555 as merely being trite, bloody, offensive rubbish, (it is arguably all those things), yet I found myself enjoying it for a variety of reasons. The effects are cheap but adequately nasty, with much slicing of throats, forees and, in a blatant rip-off of Fulci's NEW YORK RIPPER, a breast. There's a very silly decapitation scene too! The acting is slightly above average for this type of koku and the 'shot on video' quality is excellent, well ahead of the greyn, wussy-wahy NTSC home-movie look that we've had to suffer with in recent years; lighting, editing, music - all are damn near top notch. The plot! Hippie slasher discs and slices couples, usually while they're 'on the job'; talk about 'couitus Interruptus'; Bumbling sexist detectives meander in and out of the sparse storyline, and please aquirs in glorious excess... And all of this in a mere 80 minutes of screen time! So, if you can suspend your disbelief (and moral judgement) for that length of time, crack a can of 'bud', dig deep into the

popcorn and enjoy...You know it makes sense!
GORDON WELLS.

FOOD OF THE GODS II (1988)

Guided Home Video.
Directed by Daniel Lee.
83 mins.

Anyone out there remember the awful 1976 production of H.G. Wells' *FOOD OF THE GODS*? Well, some bright spark has decided to part re-make it, and also create a sequel! Hence we now have the imaginatively titled *FOOD OF THE GODS II*. Dr Kate Trager (Jackie Burroughs) calls up her friend, and fellow doctor, Neil Travis (Paul Coufos) to ask him for some much needed help as the dwarfed twelve-year-old boy that she has been trying to cure has grown into an eight-foot giant!

Neil was also a pupil of Dr Trager and agrees to try and find an antidote for the growth hormone that has gone horribly wrong. But before he can do this he must first create the drug itself to find out its weaknesses.

His work is rewarded and he manages to grow some giant tomatoes - "This is the food of the Gods!" says a colleague. He is about to get cracking on the antidote when the same colleague persuades him to try the drug on a lab rat...

They leave the lab overnight unaware that some of the other lab rats have got out of their pens and have started to munch their way through the giant tomatoes and that the drugged rat has doubled in size! Meanwhile, some animal protesters break in to wreck the joint letting the now growth infected rats out onto the streets, but not before leaving a calling card on one of intruders - his face in tons off!

The police are called in, who in turn call in a couple of 'Rambo' rat-catchers to try and eliminate the rodent problem. The college (who have funded all the experiments) hush the whole thing up and keep it from the press.

It's not long before all the rats are the size of Great Dane's and they start gnawing and shredding their way through the campus. Can Neil put an end to the bloodshed?

Even though the giant rats look crap it's the effects that make this film, they are crude but it's all handled in a way that only the best B movies know how. It contains one of the weirdest stop-motion sequences ever put on film, in a dream Neil sees himself as a ten-foot giant making love to a four-foot girl!

I'm not sure that I agree with how some of the 'actor' rats are treated, but the animals do get to get their own back on some of the scientists - one of them gets injected with his own cancer inducing serum which causes fast sprouting tumours to erupt from his body! Lots of shots of half-eaten bodies and if you have always yearned for an answer to 'synchronized swimming' then look no further! Nothing much happens in the acting department but who cares as this complete OTT extravaganza, complete with its *VILD BURCH* ending, is worth checking out!

PAUL J. BROWN.

FORMULE POUR UN MEURTRE (1986) (aka. FORMULA FOR A MURDER)

Directed by Martin Herbert (Alberto De Martino)

After directing his first horror movie, simply but cheaply entitled *HORROR*, Alberto De Martino became mainly responsible for churning out westerns, gangster and war movies and didn't really arrive in the genre until he made the rather disappointing *EXORCIST* imitation, *L'ANTICRISTO* (AKA, *THE TEMPTER*) in 1974, and then in 1977 with *THE OMEN* inspired rip-off *HOLocaust* 2000.

In 1986, De Martino - under the pseudonym Martin Herbert - moved into the giallo/crime psychological thriller genre with *7, HYDRA* (AKA, *LA CASA*

MALEDICTA which suffered a title change in France to the rather tacky *FORMULE POUR UN MEURTRE*.

I was only able to review the French dialogue version so I shall try to give it as accurate synopsis as I possibly can.

David Verbecq plays a psychotic priest, who in the prologue - Boston 1960 - greets a small girl by the name of Joanna, and presents to her a doll. Joanna runs up some steps pursued by the priest who then attacks her.

It's now the present day, and Joanna, who is now confined to a wheelchair - the results of the attack in the prologue - is happily married. But all is not what it seems to be when a local vicar has his throat violently slit by a mysterious psycho, who in fact turns out to be Joanna's attacker from the prologue. From there on she is constantly tormented by her admirer (shades of Pete Walker's *HOUSE OF MORTAL SIN* is used here), who leaves a blood-stained doll around her house and bumps off anyone who tends to get between him and her. It's not until the climax that the priest is also revealed to be Joanna's husband, who in league with the housekeeper, plan to drive her insane and thus inherit his wealth.

Despite having some very minor discrepancies, ie. the overlong talky scenes, *FORMULE...* is one of De Martino's better efforts. Its prologue is quite reminiscent of *NIGHT OF THE HUNTER* - priest terrorising young child. From there the plot divides along at its own pace and gradually builds up to a tense, nail-biting climax to rival such top psychological thrillers like *FATAL ATTRACTION* and *THE STEPMOTHER*.

Like in *L'ANTICRISTO* De Martino exploits the paralysed heroine against evil. It's only in the heroine's nightmare that she loses all sense of paralysis to fight the evil - in *FORMULE...* she dreams of jumping out of her wheelchair to stab her attacker to death.

So, with good acting, and a high-tech synthesised soundtrack (try to listen out for the *NEW YORK RIVER* scene which crops up for a brief moment) this is an o.k. giallo which I would highly recommend.

MARK CRITTENDEN.

GHOST SHIP (1952)

Warner Home Video.
Directed by Vernon Sewell.
71 mins.

A newly married couple, Guy (Dermot Walsh) and Margaret (Hazel Court), go to a boatyard in the hope of purchasing a derelict yacht with the intention of making it their home, but the yard manager is reluctant to sell it and when queried he tells them why...

The yacht called 'Cyclops' (which had all the latest technology on board) was built and owned by Professor Martineau (John Robinson) and when completed he set sail with his wife, but they never returned. One month later the yacht was found deserted - the newspapers declare it a 'modern Marie Celeste'.

The yacht has remained unsold and left in the yard ever since and it is strongly rumoured to be haunted. In fact, the yard manager has smelt cigar smoke on board when nobody has been smoking!

The couple are not deterred and after an inspection they make an offer and buy the 'ghost ship' for a bargain price.

They rebuild it, paint it and set sail with some invited friends - one of them also senses the presence of Havana cigars.

They then have had luck with engine-room staff as two chiefs quit one after the other with complaints of ghostly goings on.

Margaret also picks up on this cigar smell angle and tells Guy who simply dismisses it all with his stiff upper lip until one day he sees a strange man in overalls smoking a cigar in the engine-room!

They contact the I.L.P.P. (Institute for Investigation of Psychic Phenomena), who charge the sum of £10 to come and have a look at the yacht. Dr Fawcett (Hugh Burden) arrives and

starts to explain things (with the aid of some very impressive tuning forks!), but he needs more help and calls in a medium to get to the bottom of the yacht's mysterious past...

Well written and ably directed by Vernon Sewell (On his third of four attempts at filming the same story!), this terribly British chiller is probably a film that has escaped you, but it is worth a look if only for curiosity or to see what Hazel Court got up to before Hammer Films (there's also a young Joaquin Ackland and Ian Carmichael on show if you look hard). Only thing



that mars it is the very dated accents and the inappropriate 'jolly' music.

A bit corny and not much in the thriller department but it is still enjoyable old-fashioned fun all the same.

PAUL J. BROWN.

GREMLINS 2 : THE NEW BATCH (1990)

Warner Bros.
Directed by Joe Dante.
107 mins.

They're back, to coin a popular phrase, and this time they're even more out of control than in their first venture. Director Joe Dante has been fully unleashed and has been given a silly budget which has allowed him to come up with a myriad of childish but outstanding special-effects that tend to turn what could have been a choice horror film into a gag filled cartoon.

The plot is basically the same as before but instead of being set in a small community we now have the Gremlins running riot in a Manhattan high-rise building, The Cimp Tower.



Gizmo, the cute 'n' cuddly Mogwai, gets captured by a cloned Tina who happens to work for Dr. Catheter (Christopher Lee), who in turn works for Daniel Clamp (John Glover), the owner of the building in question as well as most of New York City. Dr. Catheter is the head of Clamp's 'Designer Gene Splicing Centre' (The Splice of Life) and is very intrigued by little Gizmo. But it just happens that Zach Galligan and Phoebe Cates, both reprising their original roles of Billy Peltzer and Kate Berenger, both have jobs in The Clamp Tower and on hearing Gizmo's familiar song Billy rescues him from the research lab. Things take a turn for the worse though when Gizmo gets soaked by a faulty drinking fountain and a group of crazy Gremlins erupt from his body.

Chaos ensues with effect after effect and it's not long until the elal-terrorists multiply by the hundred, and with nightfall looming, they gather in The Clamp Tower lobby readying themselves to take New York by storm....

When the credits rolled I was in high hopes of something special as I was reading off some excellent genre names, but although they all turn in good performances (including the two leads) their combined mountain of talent is wasted amidst the silly gags, prat-falls and special-effects work. However, Christopher Lee does appear to be enjoying himself as the sad-scientist and I have to admit that it is a joy to see him in a major fantasy picture once more and John Glover, so good in Tom Burman's rare LIFE ON THE EDGE, is a natural for the part of the billionaire Clamp. Unfortunately the whole show is just too OTT for my liking and the effects have been allowed to dominate completely. Rick Baker is the man in charge of Gremlin production this time (having taken the work of Chris Males to new heights) and he has made some of them work wonderfully but a lot of them are just too silly for words (especially the giggly one with rolling eyes and buck teeth - these things were supposed to be horrific creatures for Christ's sake, not members of the 'Rainbow' or 'Playdays' cast!!) Included in this work though are two very memorable Gremlins: one sprouts bat-wings and zooms around the sky and the other becomes part giant-spider. The Bat-Gremlin is brought to life by some tremendous stop-motion animation and was for as the highlight of the film, very reminiscent of Ray Harryhausen's classic 'Hermes' sequence from JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS. As usual with most Dante films the in-movie-jokes and cameo appearances pop up everywhere, which is fine if you're into that sort of thing, but it will go straight over the average viewer's head.

There is a great sequence in the middle of the movie when the ... no, I won't tell you, and there are some neat guest appearances by Deffy Duck and Bugs Bunny! But on the whole GREMLINS 2 is nothing more than an o.k. film strung together with set-pieces rather than a plot with the under-utilised actors being upstaged by some amazing puppetry. With the puppets being given far too much space and taking up too much of the budget and screentime, but my views are probably biased anyway especially if you take into account the fact that I hate modern comedy/horror films! But, it's sure to be a big success, especially with the awful '12' certificate, and GREMLINS 3 can't be far away! Let's just hope that Dante can get back to scaring us instead of trying to make us laugh. Wonderfully extravagant, but if you want to see this sort of thing watch EXPLOREERS instead.

PAUL J. BROWN.

HARDWARE (1990)

Palace Pictures.
Directed by Richard Stanley.
92 mins.

A blues guitar intro and the camera panning over a tremendous Moroccan landscape brings forth HARDWARE to our screens, a tale set in a post-nuke world, a world where people are asked to



line up and be sterilised, and a world where Mo (Dylan McDermott), a corps member, buys a bag of scrap robot parts for his neglected sculptor girlfriend Jill (Stacey (EARTH GIRLS ARE EAST) Travie).

Jill is pleased to see Mo and later that night the couple make passionate love, unaware that they are being spied upon by a pervert with an infra-red camera in the apartment opposite.

As Mo sleeps Jill gets back to her latest piece of art and sets her welder to work on the robot parts.

Later Mo gets a vid-call from the dwarf that runs the scrap-yard, he eust go there quickly concerning 'Mark 13' - the robot. He leaves for the yard leaving Jill crashed out in bed.

The latex gloved perv is still watching and sees that she is now alone.

Jill sleeps on but the 'Mark 13' robot starts to reassemble and repair itself at an alarming rate! When fully assembled the robot attacks Jill in a violent assault on her bed but she manages to get away. The pervert sees all of this happening (with blurred vision) and decides to go round and offer help seeing it as a good excuse to try and get into her apartment as well as her pants.

Mo arrives at the scrap-yard and finds the dwarf dead, two punctures neatly in his neck - but before dying he had managed to unravel a lot of info on the 'Mark 13' robot. It seems that 'Mark 13' is in fact a faulty Bio-Mechanical-Military-Killing-Machine, a self-repairable multi-faceted combat system with the added extra of a chemical nerve weapon on board for good measure! Meanwhile back at the flat, the 'bubbly vobly' perv gets on the wrong end of 'Mark 13' and is ripped, gouged and drilled (the thanks credits sound like B. Decker!) by a gruesome variety of attachments. Jill recoils in horror as the robot plugs itself into her house electrics console to drain away power for its own use. When sufficiently replenished the robot goes after Jill, but as it can only see with thermal vision (ie the PREDATOR) she is able to hide herself away by climbing into her fridge.

The horrified Mo comes storming home in an effort to get there before it's too late....

Cue a rapturous fanfare - at last! Britain has come up with a modern horror film (part financed by the BSB satellite boys and girlls) that delivers the goods in every category; a fast-paced storyline that, although it borrows from others (ROBOCOP, THE TERMINATOR, etc), packs a hefty punch to the guts. There is enough blood and carnage on show to ease the average horror film look positively anemic (I suggest that you take a plastic apron along to this one instead of the obligatory anal), the make-up and robotics are very convincing and are provided by Bob

Koen's Ige Animation company, the same guys responsible for HELLAISER and HIGHLANDER etc. Young writer/director Richard Stanley has crafted this, his first film, with loving care and surprising expertise. It's hard to believe that it didn't cost ten times more that its actual minuscule budget as it has the kind of look that the big studios would be proud of (it also takes tremendous use of its London locations). Stanley has a bright future ahead of him and I hope that he sticks with our genre as I'm sure that he has the potential to produce even better stuff in years to come.

All actors concerned give their all, with 25 year-old Stacey Travie doing exceptionally well in a clichéd role - she could well go on to be the new Jamie Lee Curtis!

It has the kind of attention to detail that will make it just as enjoyable on its second viewing as it is on its first (check out my 'Shock Around The Clock 41' article) - I loved the TV clips that are shown in the background (a la ROBOCOP); it seems that the world has succumbed to the 'delights' of SAM TV (as in VIDEOCOP) and the 'ads' are a treat too. 'Buy your radiation-free Reindeer steaks'; look out for Lenny from Brit-rock band 'Motorhead' 'cruising' down the polluted river in his yellow taxi; and for Mo's part-and-android hand that gets to grips with Jill!

Simon Boswell's score is very appropriate and adds to the overall enjoyment, the only thing that kind of disappoints is the ending as the robot is destroyed all too easily especially after we have been witness to its full destructive power in earlier scenes - but then again it is supposed to be faulty with all its insulation circuits up the creek!

Sit back and take it all in as HARDWARE is going to paint the town red!

'No flesh shall be spared' - Mark 13.
PAUL J. BROWN.

HEATHERS (1989)

20.20 Vision.
Directed by Michael Lehmann.
98 mins.

The 'Heathers' of the title are a group of four girls (three called Heather and another called Veronica), the elite group of Westenberg High, the best lookers, the best dressers, the most popular, etc, etc. They are also the bitchiest tongue-tart you'll ever come across with razor sharp tongues that can shred you to bits. Veronica actually despises her so called friends and keeps all of her thoughts in a frenetically written diary.

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She meets up with the school new-boy, the rebellious JD ("The extreme always creates an impression!"), and they both decide that the school would be a better place without 'The Heathers', especially as Heather No.1 who made Veronica look foolish at a University party with her ending the evening by being violently sick. Late one night JD pops in through Veronica's bedroom window and together they hatch a plan - they decide to teach Heather No.1 a lesson by making her vomit. Inducing drink and by leaving a forged suicide note (Veronica is a genius at copying handwriting!) by her side, making her look a fool when she awakens later. They mix together a powerful cocktail but JD adds a really strong boat-cleaning chemical - Heather No.1 drinks the concoction, thinking it to be a hangover cure, and dies, which semi-shocks Veronica!

The two young killers cover up the crime and the suicide note works a treat - Veronica just wants Wednesday to be a nice place.

A few days later Veronica agrees to go a double-date with one of the other Heathers and they go out with two senior dick-head jocks, things get messy for Veronica though when her date gets drunk and she gets showered in cow-shit! JD arrives and whisks her away.

The next morning at school all talk is centred on Veronica paying 'lip service' to the two jocks! She gets upset and plans out a sweet revenge with JD.

With the help of yet another forged note they set the jerks up to look like homosexuals - the mineral water gave it away - and shoot both of them! The clever JD semi-tricked Veronica into thinking that they were using some strange fake bullets that would give the effect of death!



Veronica becomes distressed when she realises that they are dead ("Dear Diary, my teen angst bullshit has a body count") and becomes repulsed by JD's attitude plus the fact that he is becoming like a smaller version of his father, who blew up JD's mum some years back!! JD tries to win her back by making one of the remaining Heathers into an even more spiteful and devious bitch in the hope that Veronica will attempt to kill her. But she fights against him and his plans to blow up the whole school...

CULT movie if ever I saw one. Offbeat, macabre, blacker than black and features two outstanding performances from young actors, Christian (THE NAME OF THE ROSE) Slater as JD and Winona (BECKLEUP) Ryder as Veronica. They both manage to generate class and style and seem totally natural for the parts. But it is Christian Slater that gets my highest marks coming across as a

young Jack Nicholson, his every brooding appearance and his skillfully delivered lines have something very special attached to them - I swear I could almost see the word 'megastar' plastered on his back!!

The script, written by Daniel Waters, is intelligent, witty, observant and is a sheer joy on the ear-drums - some of those lines could cut paper they are so sharp! Impeccably first-time directed by Michael Lehmann (a name to watch out for) and would look great on a double-bill with that other twisted view of modern life, SOCIETY!

In taking a line from the film, HEATHERS is just "very".

PAUL J. BROWN.

HELLGATE (1989)

New World Video.
Directed by William A. Levey.
89 mins.

In 1957 a bunch of bikers rode into a mining town, called Hellgate, and attacked and killed a young girl. Her devoted father saw it all and managed to get his own back on a couple of the gang.

32 years later and Hellgate has become a ghost-town but the girl's father is still there, still feeling very bitter and pissed off about his daughter's death.

An old fogey digs up a strange crystal that has the power to raise the dead and to curse the living - he rushes over to tell the demented daddy who proceeds to point the crystal at a stuffed turtle, which in turn springs to 'life' and takes a hefty chunk out of his cheek!! On seeing this he has the idea of re-animating his beloved daughter, Josie!

One night a young man called Matt, who is on his way to meet some friends, has to slam on his brakes when a girl dressed in white steps out in front of his car... The girl is Josie and she takes him to her home in Hellgate entering Matt into a nightmare world of death - and destruction...

A total slush-sash of a plot and terrible acting mar this otherwise quite likeable tale. The script is so ludicrous and the characters so weird that I ended up having a good laugh at it! Some of the effects are very good, like a decapitation and some fingers being sliced off, but on the whole they are a bit five-and-dime-store standard. The sleeve artwork boasts that the effects are by the same team that gave us HELLRAISER and HELLBOUND, but apparently I agree



Animation are denying any involvement and are bringing legal charges to the film company!

For me, the best parts of the film come when the powers of the crystal are first discovered - I nearly bust a gut at the sights of an exploding bloated goldfish and a flesh seeking turtle - this scene alone is worth the rental fee! Oh, I nearly forgot to tell you, if you thought that the days of seeing a rigid cardboard bat flapping around on visible wires were long gone, you're very wrong!!

Low budget film making at its 'best', very different from the usual and a treat to watch if you want a laugh or two.

PAUL J. BROWN.

HELL ISLAND (1982)

Obelisk Motion Pictures Ltd.
Directed by Michael Stanley.
74 mins.

A cast of unknowns battle against both cannibalistic dwarves and a deaf script in this cheap and cheerful no-budget American shocker. The results is, perhaps surprisingly, a thoroughly enjoyable and frequently gory romp. A haphazard bunch of bickering 1920's shipwreck survivors are washed up on a mysterious island somewhere in the North Atlantic. Mysterious indeed; this island appears to have a hot and sticky tropical climate, the rivers run with highly concentrated acid, and someone or something is stalking the hapless survivors through the forest... Pretty soon, after one of their number has washed his face to the bone in an acid stream (a cue for some agreeably bloody make-up), and another has been discovered reduced to a picked clean skeleton, the remaining group realised that they are not alone. After all this build-up it would be nice to be able to report that the little flesh-eating creatures live up to one's expectations; well... never mind, nice try folks! Although the little dwarves resemble a five-year-old's attempt to make a puppet Red Indian, and are 'animated' by wires and rods that are nearly always visible to the eye, by now, stunned and disbelieving eyes of the viewer, they are allowed to scratch, bite and otherwise mutilate the cast with such gusto that one hardly likes to criticise the little buggers who will be left at the end of this carnage? Will even the viewer make it to the 'tense and shocking' finale? (Okay, I admit I lied about the ending; so sue me!) I've always had a taste for turkey, and this one is Grade A, I kid you not! Unbelievable... I loved every tacky moment! Highly recommended for fans of the cheap, the bloody and the bizarre.

NIGEL BURRELL.

HIGH DESERT KILL (1989)

CIC Video.
Directed by Harry Falk.
88 mins.

A group of friends, Ray (Mitch Grant), Brad (Marc Singer) and Jim (Anthony Geary), prepare for their annual hunting trip (their first since the death of their friend Paul who got tangled in some electricity cables some six months previously).

They arrive at their usual hunting ground and meet up with professional hunter Stan Brown (Chuck Connors), who tells them that the hunting is no good this year and that all the animals seem "spooked".

They scatter Paul's ashes on the mountains and as they do so they get the feeling that they are being watched, then Stan's horses mysteriously disappear.

Two girls are also camping out in the same area and they say that something scared them. The two single guys on the trip try to chat the girls up but they are turned away, the girls come to the country to get away from that sort of thing! Later that night however, the girls get visited by the dead Paul!

Stan, Brad and Ray are then taken completely by surprise when the girls seem to have had a change of heart and they turn up at their camp and decide to get it on with them... but by morning the girls have taken the same route as the horses and have disappeared without a trace.

In spite of the fact that the game is poor the men decide to carry on with their hunting. They find a trail of blood which leads to a strange pile of bones. They then get attacked by a rampaging bear which they shoot and eat. Brad had gone off on his own and when he returns to the others he is shocked to find his friends gorging themselves on the bear's blood, they then attack him but Brad manages to escape. The next morning Brad is awakened by Paul, the others arrive on the scene too, all apologetic and stating that the bear carcass has disappeared too. They all realise that something weird is going on and decide to leave but their jeep refuses to start! They trek off on foot and at an Indian site they find one of the girls, who is in terrible shock, and the corpses of the bear and the horses (who appear to have been the subjects of prelate autopsies!?).

Who or what is responsible and why does their dead friend keep appearing?

HIGH DESERT KILL is a very taut, tense, extremely well acted and intelligent eco-thriller that studies the behaviour patterns of men through the eyes of others.

As I've already stated, the acting is of a very high calibre with all concerned giving 100% and their performances alone are worth the rental fee.

This is probably one of those tapes that is destined to be a dust collector on the video store shelves, mainly due to its odd title and its '15' rating, but it is a film that deserves to be seen, digested and thought about!

A well crafted plot backed by fast paced direction and editing make this compulsive viewing. So, if you are trying to avoid the usual clichéd slasher sequels and fancy something a little different then I have no hesitation in recommending you this film.

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE HOUSE OF USHER (1989)

Castle Pictures.

Directed by Alan Birkinshaw.

87 mins.

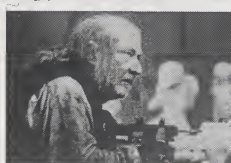
Ryan Usher (Rufus Swart) is visiting England with his fiancée, Molly (Rory Windsor) for the first time at the request of his rich and reclusive uncle, Roderick Usher (Oliver Reed), but on their way there they have a car crash.

Ryan is trapped and unconscious and Molly runs off in the direction of the isolated Usher mansion for help.

Mr. Derek, the butler, goes off to rescue Ryan. The butler returns and says that Ryan is okay and that he is recovering in hospital. Mrs. Derek gives Molly a sedative and puts her to bed.

The next day Molly is awakened by a visiting mute girl and some strange wallings coming from the walls - she is then ushered (forgive me!) into the dining room but not before she is asked to remove her perfume and to substitute her bright clothing for an old dress.

Molly finally gets to meet Roderick, who is a leering, particular man who suffers from violent



headaches and sickness (a family trait!), but their meal is interrupted when Roderick puking up over Mrs. Derek's cooking.

Later that night Molly follows some ghostly kids down through some secret passages and into a crypt - she is then horrified to discover Ryan's body laid out on a slab with Roderick presiding over him, "We must care for ourselves" he says. He then gives the stunned Molly some bullshit excuse about him being dead when Mr. Derek found him so he didn't bother with an ambulance!

Next morning Molly attempts to leave the house and calls for a taxi, but she is overheard by Mrs. Derek who alerts her husband thus preventing her from making an escape.

With the Usher house slowly sinking on its crumbling foundations Molly's fate is worsened when the family 'doctor' arrives and upon Roderick's orders gives Molly a full examination of her 'child bearing system'! The sleazy doctor announces that she is in fine condition which please Roderick no end as he has big plans on having her as his bride which will enable the Usher name to live on...

All of this is only part of the saga and mixed in with it we have much murder and mayhem and a deranged brother (Donald Pleasence) who lives within the mansion and has a power-drill attached to his hand!

Verdict - crap! Yet again, I'm calling (begging) for the return of Cohen and Price as this updated version of the Usher tale is so slow and boring that I yearned for the ending within a few minutes viewing!

Oliver Reed and Donald Pleasence are two particular actors that I'm partial to and, although Reed gets to over-act wildly and Pleasence has it up with a Black/Decker, they are both wasting not only themselves, but with material like this, valuable film stock as well! The effects have been trimmed away to virtually non-existent and apart from a nifty minor scene and a 1964 inspired rat torture sequence it could easily pass for 'PG' horror.

I urge you not to rent it because for a few pounds more you can own the Warner original! This is not what the modern horror aficionado yearns for, it has nothing new to offer and should be given, as Poe would say, a premature burial!

PAUL J. BROWN.

HUNGRY PETS (1972)

(aka. PLEASE DON'T EAT MY MOTHER / GLUMP)

Box Office International.

Directed by Carl Monson.

95 mins.

A very funny and very sleazy porno remake of Roger Corman's 1960 **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**. The rather ugly Buck Kartalian plays the part of Henry Fudd, a forty-three year-old virgin, who lives up his lunch breaks by playing Peeping Tom. Passing by a flower shop one day he is fascinated to hear a plant speak to him in an entrancing female voice. Taking it home to the house that he shares with his nagging hypochondriac mother, he finds that there is a drawback to looking after this particular plant; it's carnivorous! Soon the rapidly growing plant is filling Henry Fudd's bedroom and sucking up the food chain from flies to dogs and eventually humans. When the female plant persuades the increasingly harassed Fudd to purchase a male companion from the plant shop things begin to get out of hand, with Henry being forced to lure prostitutes and couples back to his bedroom... The scenes where the plants eat their victims are quite funny, though their habit of farting and belching putrid gases after the main course leaves much to be desired! The film ends with the two plants producing babies, which Henry promptly sells to an unsuspecting public... Of course, director Monson manages to pack as much naked flesh into this film as he can, though the couples that he chooses to display their dubious

charms for the camera are singularly unattractive. Nonetheless the 'action' on show is strong stuff for a soft-core comedy, ranging from fondling through to an onscreen 'blow-job' (alms the traditional hard-core climax) and fairly graphic fucking. Even without spurring sperm or 'insertion' shots, the film-makers obviously trod a fine line between 'X' rated and 'XXX' sex; some of the screwing looked pretty real to me! **HUNGRY PETS** is no great shakes as a film - however, the viewer is unlikely to fall asleep during it. I'd rather watch **HUNGRY PETS** any day in preference to the recent sexual remake of **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**, that's for sure!

GORDON WELLS.

JACK'S BACK (1987)

CBS/FOX.

Directed by Roddy Herrington.

93 mins.

As the title states, Jack The Ripper is back, not a reincarnation of the original but a loopy copy-cat killer who is duplicating the original killings down to a tee. Each victim has been murdered exactly 100 years to the day and all are prostitutes.

A student doctor, Johnny, is witness to the next murder and then, himself is brutally attacked and hung by the killer.

What starts off as a routine stalk 'n' slasher pic suddenly takes an intriguing turn for the better with a great twist in the plot. The unfortunate doctor has a twin brother, Richard, who saw Johnny's murder in a dream. Richard goes to the police with his story but they already believe Johnny to be the Ripper, they are also a little suspicious of Richard and follow his around town. Richard manages to lose his followers and sets off to find the real killer and to prove his brothers innocence, with the help of Johnny's would-be girlfriend and his recurring dreams.

A great little thriller that will keep your brain cells more than active with all its little plot details.

James Spader plays the twin brothers and gives a fairly strong performance. The dream/flashback sequences are handled in a similar fashion to those in **THE DEAD ZONE**, which is a little strange as in some shots Spader looks exactly like Christopher Walken!

Cynthia Glibb is the female interest and has an excellent part-down line for her boss!

The other cast members are all worthy players, most notably the superb Robert (THE HOWLING) Picardo who plays a police psychologist.

Not for total gorehounds as there's hardly any of the red stuff in it, but it is well directed, has a witty script and is slightly different to the average run-of-the-mill thriller. Worth a look.

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE KISS (1988)

RCA/Columbia.

Directed by Pen Denshaw.

94 mins.

This story begins in 1963 in the Belgian Congo with young Hilary and her father waving goodbye to Felice, an extremely unwell girl, who is being taken to a sanatorium by her aunt. As they start their train journey the aunt 'kisses' Felice and then dies horribly leaving Felice full of health and vitality.

Time zooms forward to today's America with Hilary, her husband Jack and their daughter Amy giving a barbecue. Hilary gets a phone call from her sister, Felice, whom Jack and Amy have never met (in fact Amy didn't even know that her mother had a sister!), who says that she needs to see Hilary urgently. Hilary seems very disturbed by the call and goes out to buy a gun but a tragic accident occurs as she peers into the gun-shop window - a truck swerves into her searing her leg and causing a very painful death.

Felice appears at the scene of her sister's funeral and at a later date meets Amy and Jack at



the graveside.

After a while Felice moves in with her long lost relatives with the sole aim of passing on the family heirloom and sealing it with a kiss!

Amy takes an instant dislike to her new auntie and starts getting very worried when her friend gets mangled in an escalator especially when she finds the poor girl's sunglasses in Felice's suitcase along with some strange black magic type paraphernalia.

Amy seeks some help from her boyfriend and from Brenda, an understanding next-door neighbour, but gets no help from her dad, who's now into Felice in more ways than one, even though he's been attacked by a weird cat-like creature in his kitchen cupboard!

As time goes by Felice becomes desperate to pass on the 'kiss' to Amy...

THE KISS turns out to be a worthy addition to the list of possession movies as it offers something a little different and has a cast that seem to be enjoying their work, giving the well-written script a bit of credibility. The part of Felice is taken by the very sensuous Joanna Paoula who looks quite at home in our genre and would be most welcome again. Other parts are played by Heredith Selenger (Amy), Nicholas Kilbertus (Jack) and Mial Kuzik (Brenda) who all add to the overall enjoyment of the film. The effects range from very good (check out the realistic accident at the beginning and, later on, a neat pair of scissors through a neck and a hedge trimmer being put to some good use) to average (the silly cat-creature with no real significance except as a twisted vitch's cat) and are the work of Chris (THE FLY) Wales.

Not the best horror title around but worth shelling out a couple of quid for at your local video emporium.

PAUL J. BROWN.

LEVIATHAN (1989)

20th Century Fox.

Directed by George P. Cosmatos.

92 mins.

Ridley Scott once said that it was incidental that ALIEN was set in space and that it could just as well have taken place on a deserted island or stranded ship... well how about under the sea? For that's what we have here, a film that plagiarizes ALIEN at every turn (there's even a cheeky variation on the famous 'coocon' scene that never made it into the release print of ALIEN). But don't get the idea that this is just another ALIEN rip-off, because there's a large dollop of THE THING here along with around

a dozen others you can spot for yourselves, some intentional (there's a character called Bowman) and some just plain ridiculous (like the JAWS reference in the finale, it looks pared and should have been dropped altogether). However, none of this detracts from the fact that LEVIATHAN is vastly entertaining for most of its 92 minutes.

For the first ten minutes you can't help comparing it, unfavourably, to James Cameron's THE ABYSS (we'll forget about Sean S. Cunningham's disappointing DEEP STAR SIX) even though this couldn't have been an influence as LEVIATHAN was being made at the same time as Cameron's epic and, indeed, was released in the USA before THE ABYSS but was then withheld from UK audiences so that it wouldn't get swamped in the wake of the greater publicity afforded to Cameron's film (ironically, the very week it was released in the UK, THE ABYSS received its UK video release!) but once the characters start establishing themselves LEVIATHAN can be enjoyed purely on its own terms.

The film opens with the cosmopolitan crew of eight including, you guessed it, two females, trading sexual banter and bitching about the company (the company bitch being Meg Foster, confined to appearing on a TV monitor for most of her screen time so robbing us of a proper view of

those amazing eyes) for whom they are mining the ocean floor for precious metals.

Ali's well until 'Six Pack' (Daniel Stern in the John Hurt part) happens upon a Russian wreck, the 'Leviathan', and, via some dodgy vodka, unwittingly unleashes a genetic aberration that terrorises the crew and lets Stan Winston and his creature crew's imagination run as wild as the creature they thought up.

Cut off from the surface (with their bosses topside having already written them off) and with one of their own, ever decreasing, number trying to sabotage things below (well, at least he's not a robot!), the tension rises as fast as the body count until the remaining survivors make their desperate bid for the surface and freedom.

The hard working pick 'a mix cast includes Peter RABCOOP Weller in a low-key but effective performance as the group's leader; Lias Ellbacher as Bowman; Richard RABBO Crenna as the unpredictable doctor; Amanda THE KINGED Pays in the Ripley role, complete with flame thrower and brief white (face) undies (which she fills very nicely, but that's still no excuse for keeping them on in the shower), and once you get used to her plummy voice, making her sound like she should be taking tea and cucumber sandwiches on the croquet lawn not mining the ocean depths, she's really rather good; and Ernie GHOSTBUSTERS Hudson, mainly there for comic relief and so he gets all the best lines, but will he have to pay the price? You should certainly enjoy finding out.

Director George P. Cosmatos does a pretty competent job, making sure that all the shocks work and keeping the film moving at a sufficient pace to cover any weaknesses in the script, while the production designs of Ron Cobb (who, along with Stan Winston, continues the ALIEN connection) and Alex Thompson's cinematography ensure that the film always looks good.

So in the final analysis maybe not quite enough class for the first division but certainly worth a place in the second division play-offs, Brian MARK HURTON.

LIVING DOLL (1989)

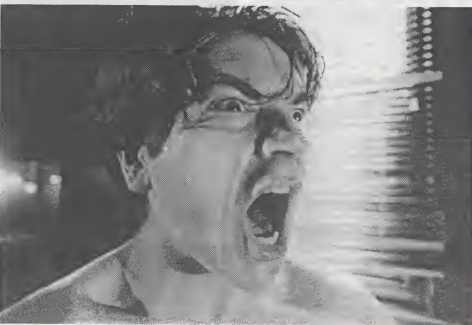
MGW/UA Home Video.

Directed by Peter Litten & George Dugdale.

94 mins.

Howard, a medical student, makes ends meet by working as a hospital mortuary attendant. He is a bit of a loner and has secret desires for Christine who works at the hospital in the florists, trouble is she never ever notices him.

Howard lives alone in a seedy boarding house owned by landlady Mrs Swartz, who is always



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complaining about his irregular rent payments, his lonely existence, he never pulls back the curtains and he keeps dead flowers in his room. It is his spare time he follows Christine and takes lots of photos of her. His co-worker (and only friend) Jess, invites him out for a drink with a couple of nurses, but Howard is only interested in Christine - he is so preoccupied with her that his work starts to get sloppy - and he sees her leave with her bull-boy asshole of a boyfriend in his flash car.

Later on he arrives at the morgue for his next duty (a car crash victim) and is horrified when he unzips the bodybag and finds the lifeless form of Christine in it - "I saw her eyes twitch" he says to his boss!

He has to prepare the girl's body for the pathologist and goes off to check if Steve (the boyfriend) was admitted to the hospital. He finds him bandaged and plastered, lying through his teeth about the crash, putting all the blame on poor Christine.

Back at the slab, the other assistant has failed to report in so Howard has to assist in Christine's autopsy! He watches with tears in his eyes as the pathologist cuts, peels, and saves away at Christine's naked form.

Afterwards Howard goes through her possessions and steals a few pieces for himself as a keepsake. Before leaving he has one more look at the girl he loved, she is now neatly stitched up with everything back in its place looking like a beautiful version of Frankenstein's creation!

When he arrives back home he examines Christine's belongings and is shocked when he reads a card from her purse that reads "I am not dead, I suffer from a rare form of cataplexy. Should you find me unconscious, please inform my doctor...".

In a panic he runs back to the hospital, but she has already been taken for burial! He has terrible nightmares of her asking for help - she is not dead!!

He borrows his friends car and later that night he digs up Christine's body in an effort to 'save' her. He takes her back to his room and tucks her up in his bed - her broken neck swiveling freely - but by the light of the night she still looks in pretty good shape.

Morning arrives and Christine is looking real dead, decay has started to imbue itself, but poor old Howard still sees her as the love of his life.

He goes off to work and tells Jess that he has a date!

That night he prepares dinner and dresses his girl. They spend the night curled up on the sofa, he talks to her, brushes her hair, applies her favourite perfume (which she is in desperate need of!), paints her nails and makes her look 'good'!

"Do you have a girl in there?" queries Mrs Swartz as she demands her overdue rent. Trouble is Howard has been blowing his wages on presents for Christine. Desperate for money he resorts to stealing from a 'stiff' on a slab!

He spies on Christine's former boyfriend who already has a new girl and finds him gloating over all the insurance money he has gleaned from the accident.

Howard tells Christine all about Steve's activities, cuddles her and cries.

As each day passes, the process of decay takes a firmer hold and the rats have moved in on Christine eating their way into her rotting flesh - Mrs Swartz complains about the awful smell coming from his room!

As a result of the theft at work Howard loses his job, but not to worry as it means that the 'lovers' can spend more time together.

Howard buys Christine a wedding dress and they get married in front of a TV preacher. "Alone at last" says Howard on their wedding night but they are interrupted by the Health Department, called in by Mrs Swartz upon her discovery of rats. Howard hides his girl away and lets them get on with fumigating the house.

Jess manages to get Howard his job back, but Howard cannot bear to be parted from his decomposing bride so he takes her to work and

keeps her safe in the morgue.

Howard will do anything for his wife, perhaps even murder...

A really extraordinary tale of perverted love with a surprisingly high quality production look to it - a very brave release from video big-boys NCM/UA and my hat tips in their direction for giving LIVING DEAD the chance it deserves!

A superb story by Paul Hart-Wildan and it is realistically directed by Peter Liften and George Dugdale (the men who previously gave us SLAUGHTER HIGH) and is one of those films that dares to toy with the thresholds of tastelessness and actually get away with it without really offending (MCCORMACK proved too strong for some people and will never be legally seen here anyway!)

Mark Jax plays the demented Howard and gives the film a kind of HAROLD & MAUDE and FADE TO BLACK type feel - how the hell he performed that French-kiss on the putrified Christine I do not know!

Page 3 pin-up Katie O'Grill makes her screen debut as the 'rotten' Christine (actually in some make-up shots she is played by Nicola Turner) and plays most of her scenes completely nude and has very little dialogue (well she wouldn't have would she?).

The other morgue attendant, Jess, is played by Gary Martin who also provides the rendition of Cliffs 'Living Doll' over the closing credits and that set of gardening tools, yes, the Eartha Kitt plays the landlady Mrs Swartz!

Excellent sleeve design and first class corpse make-up (the latter thanks to the talents of Paul Catling) but unfortunately the dreaded BBFC have had to 'prove' their existence yet again and have removed a few of the more gruesome effects scenes!

However, this will not spoil your overall enjoyment of the film as it is still highly entertaining stuff with hardly a 'stiff' joke in sight!

PAUL J. BROWN.

MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (1989)

NCM/UA Home Video.

Directed by Larry Brand.

80 mins.

Quite why producer Roger Corman wanted to re-make his own film is totally beyond me, as the 1964 original is surely one of horror-doms classics and featured one of Vincent Price's best ever performances and had the added bonus of exquisite photography from Nicholas Roeg that belied it's pitifully low budget; nevertheless, I was keen to see if he had that something extra to give. I plugged the review cassette home into the VCR and

set back to find out...

Machivel (played by former AVENGERS Patrick Macnee) is the carrier of the red-death itself and rides through the countryside infecting those who come in contact with him.

Prince Prospero (Adrian Paul in the Price role) hides away from the plague in his matte painted castle and decides to throw a masked ball, inviting nobles and several buxom village girls along to the proceedings.

As death takes its hold on the area, Machivel sheds his rags to reveal the blood red of his cloak.

Prospero falls in love with Juliette (Clare Hook), one of the village girls, much to the disliking of his wife Lucrèce (Tracy Reiner), amidst lots of torture and general degradation of the unfortunate villagers. But the girl is in love with Claudio (Jeff Osterhage) who is a friend of the Prince.

The ball gets underway and death (Machivel) is invited in (it seems that Machivel was the former tutor of the Prince).

As the party-goes dance almost 'stilly walks' type steps, Machivel mingles his way through them, the pus spouting plague juice like it's going out of fashion, and they start dropping like flies...

Where have the atmospheric sets gone, what's happened to the sinister pervading mists and the general air of menace and suspense? It's stayed in 1964 that's for sure! The outdoor shots in this re-make are far too bright, I was never ever convinced that I was watching medieval times, although Mark Governor's score did keep trying to remind me, along with the fights and that dreaded dancing!

Patrick Macnee is sorely wasted (a strange choice for him) but he is still the best thing in it even though he sounds like John Steed the whole time!

There are a couple of decent effects shots but even the blood is kept to a minimum. Very slow in places and it is not helped by Adrian Paul's mumbling of his lines (to be fair, it could've been bad sound reproduction!).

Hire it if you must but the Warner sell-through release of the original is still your best bet! Why Roger, why?

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH (1989)

Castle Pictures.

Directed by Alan Birkinshaw.

89 mins.

This second recent re-hash of Poe's classic horror tale, this time with story only loosely used as this is an attempt at bringing it to a modern



setting (even though it's still set in a gothic castle).

Michelle McBride, making her motion picture debut, plays Rebecca Stevens, a beautiful inquiring reporter trying to get a scoop of a story for "Snoopy", a kind of glossy "News Of The World" type publication.



She shakes her way through the Austrian mountains until she arrives at a celebrity gala being thrown by Ludwig (Herbert Loe, THE DEAD ZONE Loe) at his lavish 18th Century ancestral home. She bluffs her way in using a forged ticket in the hope of interviewing a fading soap-star and to try and get some embarrassing pictures of her.

Once inside she tries to mingle into the party - no expense has been spared by Ludwig, as such food and drink as you could ever wish for, a live rock group and even a giant PRISONER-type chess game - you name it, it's there.

Rebecca meets up with the various 'friends' of Ludwig (Simon Poland, top-billed Frank Stallone, Brenda Vaccaro, etc) who are all a bitchy, bickering bunch of people that sponge off of Ludwig in a facade of friendship.

Ludwig makes his appearance but not before overseeing the proceedings on his camera monitors - Ludwig is not a well seen though and every now and then he gets the shakes and has to be injected by his beautiful young nurse in the castle cellars.

The party is in fact a masked ball, but one of the guests is packing more than a disguise - who is the red cloaked-figure that has started to hack and slash through the guest list and why?

A pathetic attempt by Alan Birkinshaw and producer Harry Alan Towers (although this is marginally better than the other 'new version') at giving another Poe masterpiece the re-make treatment (they were also guilty for THE HOUSE OF USHER, see the review elsewhere this issue), I mean, what an original idea of updating the 'Red Death' incarnation as a psycho-slasher, gosh!!

Good gore effects are this film's high points, which include a decapitation by penknife clocks topped blades; razor slashing; and a rather eye-

vetering scene where a young girl has her flesh

interviewed with some wool on a loom.

Poor old Herbert Loe looks mega-placed-off and seems to be drawing most of his inspirations from his previous roles in the PINK PANTHER series. Brenda Vaccaro bitchies her way through quite revocably as the ageing actress and Frank Stallone tries to impersonate his brother at every opportunity - why bother? Newcomer Michelle McBride does her best and quite nicely too, but she is just another from the long line of average actresses trying to make a living from films, what I'm trying to say is that it could have been anyone out there!

When we're going to have something different to try and thrill us and what about some original

plots, as this is just the same old 'potential victims looked in a building with a nutter all night' affair, which, quite frankly, I'm sick of. PAUL J. BROWN.

MILLENNIUM (1989)

Verner Hinge Video.
Directed by Michael Anderson.
102 mins.

Two people-packed planes collide in mid-air causing them to crash and explode.

The authorities call in Bill Smith (Kris Kristofferson), an air crash specialist, to investigate the cause.

The full investigations get under way, the black box flight recorder is recovered and they interview the over-worked air-traffic controller, etc. The cockpit voice tape is played back and they hear something strange, one of the pilots reports that the passengers are already dead before the plane has crashed stating that they are 'all burnt up'. They also find a batch of digital watches that are inexplicably going backwards!

At Smith's press conference the talk swings towards computer error as the cause, but Dr. Arnold Mayer (Daniel J. Travanti), a physicist, who was also at the crash scene, asks if anything unusual has been found - Smith declines to comment.

Smith meets up with Louise Baltimore (Cheryl Ladd), a member of the airline staff, and they spend the night together. "Fate has brought us together" she tells him and tries to get him to give up his stressful job. He tells her that they will talk about it later, "I may not be here later" she says. He leaves the hotel room but regrets he spoke to her and goes back to the room to apologise, only to find that she has disappeared without a trace!

The airline know nothing about her which leaves Bill in an understandably puzzled state.

Later he goes back to the pile of aircraft wreckage and finding a strange pulsating object, starts to fiddle with it which gives him an unexpected jolt, blue lights flash and he falls to the ground. At the very same moment three people arrive in the blue light to claim the device, one of them is Louise. She takes the object (a stun gun) but Bill manages to retain a part of it. She tells him to stop messing around with things.

It seems that Louise and her buddies are time travellers from the future, a very desperate future, an ecologically trashed world with the surviving population made up from dying humenoids. They can no longer bear children and



in order to repopulate they are forced to replace their dead with innocent disaster victims from the past.

The whole procedure is very delicate as nothing must occur that is likely to cause a paradox (an intrusion from the future which may alter the past), but disaster strikes when Louise leaves behind the part of the stun gun as she did the very same thing when paying a visit to 1963, and it seems that the two pieces are destined to be put together which will cause a 'tsunami' and man will be completely destroyed...

John Varley adapted the screenplay for his own short story entitled 'Air Raid' and it shows,

because as a full length film it seems far too padded out, I'm sure that it would have worked a treat as a twenty minute TWILIGHT ZONE episode. The ideas are there but it lacks pace and sparkle. Directed very flatly by Michael Anderson in his familiar style, remember LOGAN'S RUN and 1984? (It's also interesting to note that MILLENNIUM's robot looks virtually the same as the one featured in LOGAN'S RUN!).

Cheryl Ladd and Kris Kristofferson work quite well together but on the whole Ladd's acting is very lacklustre and she ends up getting blasted into oblivion by Kristofferson who gives a totally credible performance that only falters at the finale.

A bit of an oddity but I suggest that you should wait and catch up with it when it airs on TV. PAUL J. BROWN.

MISSING LINK (1988)

CIC.
Directed, Written and Photographed by David & Carol Hughes.
88 mins.

The setting is Africa, one million years ago. A time of violent conflict between man and ape. The dinosaurs have long gone and man has weapons and fire, the ape-ape is a peaceful innocent creature but his race is slowly being destroyed. The story that unfolds is that of one ape-ape, the last of his kind, and his adventure as he searches for peace, discovering new lands and animals as he is driven from his home by man's violence.

If you're a lover of 'Survival' type programmes and you're a reader of 'National Geographic' magazine then you'll go (forgive the expression) apeshit over this magnificently photographed and expertly realised almost-documentary type film. The film, as with QUEST FOR FIRE, has no dialogue only the grunts and groans of the ape-ape, who is acted and aimed to perfection by Peter Elliott, who deserves some kind of award for his ability (and also for the fact he endured the heat of the Neolithic climate whilst wearing the stunning make-up of Rick Baker, who once again has come up with yet another incredible ape costume), he even brings a large amount of humour to the role!

Some of the shots of the ape-ape walking against a backdrop of African wildlife are sheer beauty on the eyes, looking as if a history text book has come to life!

Produced by the team that were responsible for RAIR and BATMAN and part-narrated by Michael Gambon, MISSING LINK is one of the best fantasy films around! PAUL J. BROWN.

NOT OF THIS EARTH (1988)

MGM/UA Home Video.
Directed by Jie Wynorski.
77 mins.

Obviously the main attraction here, and the reason the film was (re)made, is to see 'notorious' Traci Lords in a legitimate film role. Yes, Traci as you've never seen her before: see Traci vertical; see Traci clothed (albeit in, verily, a nurses uniform, a tiny 'kini', and her birthday suit, for old habits die hard and Traci does still have a couple of opportunities to display her ample physical charms); see Traci discuss a cure for cancer (!); and see Traci act - because she certainly can, turning in quite an accomplished performance, with some nice comic touches, within the confines of the below-average script and lousy B-movie dialogue.

The slight story - proceeded by a bizarre credit sequence which features lots of gore-laden clips none of which appear in or have anything to do with the film itself - concerns an amnesiac alien (a suitably colourless performance from Arthur Roberts) who has to wear dark glasses to hide his death-ray eyes (and when he dons his pork-pie hat he looks just like an ageing 'Blues Brother'!!)

and employs nurse Traci to give him regular blood transfusions while he sends specimens of mankind (usually bimbos and usually topless) back to his war-torn home planet of Davenna. But Traci discovers the dastardly doings and aided by Jeremy (Lenny Julian), the oafish chauffeur, and some rabid dog's blood, thwarts the evil aliens to save the Earth, and all in 77 minutes. Only what happened to the bat-monster of Roger Corman's 1956 original?

Anyway, it's definitely Traci's show, as witnessed by the video sleeve (and label) which bears the legend 'Traci Lords is NOT OF THIS EARTH' (only, or, she is as she plays an Earthling throughout - or perhaps they're referring to her heavenly physique!), and I look forward to the next step in her move to more mainstream cinema, starring alongside Iggy Pop in John Waters' *CRY BABY* (did I say mainstream?). Already a top ten hit in the USA it sounds ideal. MARK MURTON.

NEVER CRY DEVIL (1989)

Medusa.
Directed by Rupert Hitzig.
88 mins.

The film opens with the abduction of a prostitute on the streets.

The plot then starts to unfold with young Billy Colton (Derek Rydall), late for school again, giving his usual lame excuse to his history teacher, Mr Willard (Allen Garfield), who threatens to expel him in spite of there being only three weeks to go before graduation.

Back at home, Billy watches his new neighbour move in, the beautiful 26 year-old Lisa, who promptly asks him to pop round that night for a welcome drink. Needless to say Billy is there like a shot, giving his schoolboy blushes and generally making a fool of himself especially when she kisses him for taking over a present from his mum.

Feeling rather pleased with himself he tells his friend about the encounter, but because of his reputation for telling tall stories he refuses to believe him.

Another hooker is attacked and this time murdered - the seventeenth over the past couple of years. Billy rigs up a telescope in his bedroom that focuses right in on Lisa's bedroom and after a few nights, with her being with a different man on each occasion he draws the conclusion that she is in fact a prostitute!

In a state of excitement he tells his friends, Kelly and Sam, who then come round on the next evening to view the wild goings on for themselves. But, unfortunately for Billy, Lisa is having a night 'off' and goes to bed alone. Of course, his friends just laugh at him and blame it all on another crazy story.

Feeling played-off Billy is determined to prove his story to them and when Lisa starts up again with a trick who's into handcuffs and screaming he climbs up onto Lisa's roof in an attempt at taking a photograph as evidence.

But, Billy sees a lot more than he bargained for and is witness to Lisa's murder by a bizarre satanist, who on seeing Billy makes a lunge at him with a knife. Billy manages to get away but in the struggle he managed to unmask the killer who turns out to be his teacher, Mr Willard!

He goes straight to the police and tells all to Captain Crane (Richard Roundtree in yet another stereo-typed role). The police then pay Mr Willard a visit, but he says that he was in all evening with his half-witted brother Stanley (Michael J Pollard).

Billy's story is even harder to swallow when the police find that his 'photographs' of the murderer are non-existent because he didn't take the lens cap off!

Later that night Billy gets a threatening phone call from Willard - but again no-one believes him although Kelly is starting to suspect some truth in his fears.

In a desperate attempt at trying to protect

himself and get help he goes to see an old friend of his father's, a retired cop called Ron Devereaux (Elliott Gould), but even he won't assist.

Meanwhile Willard and Stanley are going about their sordid business in the confines of their hidden alter-room, torturing and then sacrificing one of the captured prostitutes to Satan.

Billy is once again threatened by Willard, this time face to face - his life is becoming a living nightmare.

Then out of the blue he gets a phone call from Devereaux, it seems that he has changed his mind and wants to help...

First rate satanic-paranoia-thriller with an interesting moral that is undemanding entertainment which, although low on gore, pays off in other departments, namely its cast, viz Michael J Pollard as the retarded Stanley pulling out all the stops, all cockles and wacky craziness. Allen Garfield is suitably menacing, but the part could have benefited from more splotch as he tends to play it as if it were a '15' certificate instead of an '18'. Billy Colton is acted by Derek Rydall who does all that is asked of him and works very well. However, the inclusion of Elliott Gould's character is completely wasted and could have been built upon to play a much bigger part and, although his usual style of acting grates my teeth, what little he has to do is done with polish and style.

The direction is good for the first 2 of the film but loses a lot of momentum towards the end.

All in all, a good idea that doesn't get bogged down by the all-too-familiar teen scenario's and does allow a fair amount of individuality from its younger players.

Not for gorehounds but it is recommended viewing for those of you who enjoy thrillers along the lines of *RAGE WITH THE DEVIL*, etc.

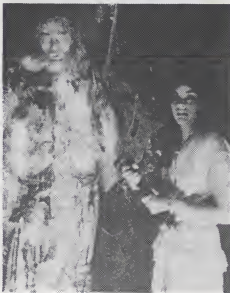
PAUL J. BROWN.

NIGHTWISH (1988)

Medusa.
Directed by Bruce R. Cook.
86 mins.

The ad line on the press-release states "You'll never sleep again", but unfortunately the normally reliable Medusa chaps have got it totally wrong, because sitting through nearly an hour and a half of this rubbish is likely to send anyone to sleep forever!

The ludicrous plot involves a group of parapsychology students being put to the test by their monotone tutor and mentor, Dr Mendele, who is studying their dreams and nightmares trying to stretch them to the limits of their worst fears in a bizarre attempt at unlocking the secrets of the mind. At first he has them take their turn in



an ALTERED STATES type isolation tank and then gradually shifts their location to an old backwoods house that is supposedly haunted.

The programme gets underway and lots of weird and crazy things start happening with torture and death being the key players in the wacky doct's curriculum. Is it real or is it just a dream?

All concerned give completely one-dimensional performances, the worst of which is a virtual brain-dead piece of acting by Jack Starrett as the Doctor, that will leave even the most patient of horror-addicts clutching at the threshold of sleep induced madness! Okay, so there are one or two decent gore effects but even they are not really worth wasting your precious viewing time on, believe me!

A mess from the start, be warned!
PAUL J. BROWN.

PAPERHOUSE (1989)

Vestron Video.
Directed by Bernard Rose.
89 mins.



Director Bernard Rose and his team have done an excellent job of bringing to the screen Catherine Storr's popular children's book 'Marianne Dreams' - the desolate house on the hill looks exactly as pictured in when read the book at Primary School - producing a film that works on several levels and so should appeal to a wide age group; the film actually carries a '15' certificate which both robs it of a younger audience who would find much to enjoy while also possibly alienating adult viewers who might expect it to be too childish for their tastes, but in this case the certificate is even more arbitrary than usual and should be ignored.

The story concerns an eleven-year-old girl, Anne (Charlotte Burke), confined to bed with a mystery illness who finds that drawings she makes while awake feature in her dreams. Hearing of a boy with a similar condition to hers she adds him to the drawing and he duly arrives in her dream. But there is a price to pay, once she has drawn something it can't be rubbed out, so when, in a fit of rage, she scribbles over part of the picture, the father figure she has drawn (a largely absent seller in real life) is blinded and comes to the house to attack her. The film then takes on a darker edge as the dream house comes to reflect all her worst childhood fears. The story then takes another turn during its final stages to become quite a moving family drama.

The central performance by first-timer Charlotte Burke is remarkably good, especially as Anna isn't always the most sympathetic of characters; but Glenna Headly as her mother is less impressive with a poorly drawn (no pun intended) character and is finally sunk by some very dodgy dubbing. Ben Cross is good as the father but arrives too late to ever get into top gear, while Gemma Jones as the nurse doesn't have a lot to do but does it very well.

So in conclusion, the '15' certificate and misleading video sleeve quotes such as 'A better horror film than either DREAM DEMON or HELLRAISER II' (City Limits) disguise the fact that at its best this an intelligent and thoughtful horror film that should prove a refreshing change for anyone satiated on mindless gore-fests.

MARK MURTON.

PUPPETMASTER (1989)

Entertainment In Video.
Directed by David Schmoeller.
86 mins.

PUPPETMASTER is bound to be compared to Stuart Gordon's excellent DOLLS, in that both films feature living toys, but there all similarities end.... This really is execrable trash, whichever way you choose to look at it; my advice would be DON'T!... Producer Charles Band can add yet another failure to his long and undistinguished C.V.

Lacking any of the genuine humour, visual style and quirky creepiness of DOLLS, PUPPETMASTER opts for often poorly achieved puppet scenes, and cheap and tacky gore. The cast is unrelentingly dire, bar Paul La Met, and Jimmy Skaggs (who makes a convincingly sadistic villain). The cameo appearance of Barbara RE-ANIMATOR Crampton is fun. However, PUPPETMASTER's main problems stem from its script (typical American knee-jerk horror/comedy tripe...), and the 'plot' meanders more than the River Nile. This is couch-potato material, designed to be forgotten five minutes after viewing has ceased; like popcorn it temporarily satisfies, but PUPPETMASTER just got stuck in my craw... I found myself craving after sweeter things, not this celluloid equivalent of junk-food. If PUPPETMASTER signifies the direction that American horror cinema is heading then God help us...

A total and absolute waste of time; avoid like the plague...
NIGEL BURRELL.

RE-ANIMATOR 2 (1989)

Horror.
Directed by Brian Yuzna.
92 mins.

Eight months on from the original and Herbert West (Jeffrey Combs) and Dan Cain (Bruce Abbott) are 10,000 miles away from the Miskatonic University and are about to finish a tour as volunteers in a bloody and brutal civil war, where they have continued their experiments with the dead. "This is no longer about re-animating the dead... we will create new life" says West! When their tour ends they both resume working at the Miskatonic Hospital in Arkham, with the obsessed West carrying on his 'work' regardless, even though Cain is feeling repulsed by it all. Meanwhile, a detective, Lt Leslie Chapman (Claude Earl Jones), is still snooping and investigating the "Miskatonic Massacre" and takes a vital clue to Dr Graves (Mel Stewart), the hospital pathologist - the severed head of Dr Carl Hill (played most of the time by David Gale) - which he found at a circus sideshow. The doc puts Hill's head with the rest of the recovered bits including a phial of the re-animating agent. West has settled back to work quite nicely and, not surprisingly, body parts get reported missing fairly regularly. Lt Chapman notices West remove something from the lab.

West and Cain have taken up residence in a large old house (a former mortuary, natch!) which is the perfect place to continue after hours. The excited West shows his unwitting collaborator his latest 'idea', a mish-mash of fingers with a severed eye on top that springs to life like a perverse spider when he applies the re-agent! On seeing this Cain vents out, but is semi-blackmailed when West produces Meg's heart (Meg was Cain's girlfriend, remember?) and talks of re-constructing her from scratch. But at this very moment Lt Chapman drops by for a chat. Back at the hospital, Dr Graves starts to fiddle around with West's old experiments and injects some of the re-agent into a dead bat, which promptly attacks him and in a desperate attempt to save himself he slices off the still flapping wings with a scalpel! Thinking of the 'new' possibilities he then gives Dr Hill's head a good dose of the green-glowing liquid which then takes



over completely, calling upon the zombies that still survive (one being the wife of Lt Chapman!) from the first movie to come to his aid.

West cracks on and is producing all sorts of hideous monstrosities and then commences work on the kit-form bride.

Chapman, still on the scent, comes back and snoops further leaving West no alternative but to kill him! Cain hears the commotion and bursts into the lab. West resolves the problem by re-animating him, but as soon as he is up and running again the cop reaches for his gun and attempts to kill his murderer! But the swift thinking West is there again and neatly lops off the gun-toting hand with a handy machete! This only makes the cop-corpsa more wild and he attacks a dog, ripping its leg clean off before

running out into the night air.

Then in a bizarre operation the twisted West 'saves' the dog by grafting the cop's severed arm onto the canine's stump!

Back at their real hospital jobs Cain loses a close patient that reminded him very much of his beloved Meg. West capitalizes on her death and abducts her head for his creation, and in a macabre way wins over Cain's assistance.

"What's happened to Dr Hill's head? I hear you ask." Well, the zombieified cop bursts in and forces Dr Graves to graft the discarded bat-wings onto Hill's head, thus enabling him to flap around! He then sets off to find West and get his revenge.

Back at the lab the 'bride' awakes...

Lovers of the first will not be disappointed as

this has everything (and more) that made the original so popular (shame it had to lose its **BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR** title though). Tremendous effects and a vondrous finale that has to be seen to be believed, with one weird effect after another (Hill's cheap 'n cheerful bat-head is a little too much though) combined with memorable lines ("I have created what no man's mind and no woman's womb could ever achieve") and a first rate cast make **RE-ANIMATOR 2** a viewing experience to treasure - all this without a single teen-in-peril in sight!

Jeffrey Combs and Bruce Abbott have (thankfully) reprised their original roles and are both quite superb. Combs gets my money though, for his devotion to duty (a modern Peter Cushing; come to think of it, this is a modern Hammer film, isn't it?). But, full credit must be given to Kathleen Kinmont as the patchwork bride, who, as well as wearing some amazing make-up (a medical students dream), manages to draw lots of feeling and pathos into her part - the scene where she attempts to stand on her ballerina's feet and then tries to wrap her hooker's legs around Cain was very moving and extremely well executed, and is the kind of attention to detail that makes Brian Yuzna's films so interesting to look at. As well as being an excellent producer and writer Yuzna has now fully established himself as one of the top horror directors. I'm very keen to see what he has in store for us in the future!

Blood, guts and general carnage - it's all here, a real box of delights that delivers, so, in response to Dr Hill's disembodied cry of "Are we having fun yet?", the answer has got to be "Yes, we are!!".

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE RETURN OF SWAMP THING (1989)

Medusa.

Directed by Jim Wynorski.

84 mins.

Once upon a time... In the swamp, a bunch of would-be soldiers are playing vargames when they get attacked by some mis-shapen mutated creature. Two get killed and two run off only to be shot and tranquilized by a girl, and one other runs into the films hero... Swamp Thing, who proceeds to save the poor chap by beating three bags of shit out of the mutant!

Abby Arcane (Heather Locklear) is a girl with problems; first of all she's the stepdaughter of the evil Dr. Anton Arcane (Louis Jordan) and secondly she gives names to all of her plants (I). "Why can't men be more like plants?" she says "at least when you stroke a plant it doesn't get the wrong idea"... mmm... Indeed!!?

Those of you who stayed the course with Wes Craven's original will remember that Dr. Arcane is the arch-enemy of old Swampy and was the man responsible for his present plant-like condition. Arcane is still up to his old tricks, searching for a rejuvenation cure, and in his mansion down in his lab amongst his sacred grubs, he is experimenting on poor unfortunates (like the two tranquilized at the beginning) by splicing their genes with those of animals.

The chap that Swampy saved has been to the police with his story, which causes a dumb sheriff to go snooping around in the swamp. Arcane then realises that Swamp Thing is still alive.

Abby's mother died in mysterious circumstances and she sets off for the Arcane mansion to get some answers from her evil step-dad. Obviously the mutants that weren't kicked hard enough at the beginning as if it's still strolling around the bayou area and attacks a couple of kids (who reappear throughout the film)... suddenly Swamp Thing is there again to settle a score!

Arcane and one of his assistants cleverly manage to get a sample of Abby's blood - to further his quest for youth! On realising that something is wrong, Abby wanders off into the swamp, but is confronted by two slepton good ol' boys... cue Swampy, who after dealing out the punishment,



tells Abby the whole truth about Arcane and himself and vows to get to the bottom of her mother's death.

Arcane's troop of guards find the plant-infested hero, gun him down and then blow him into bits of slime with hand grenades. Any ordinary hero would've been finished, but not Swamp Thing, he simply reconstitutes himself in a bathtub in Arcane's mansion!

Can Swamp Thing help Abby and put an end to Arcane's evil doings...?

THE RETURN OF SWAMP THING is one of those rare beasts that actually peels its original into insignificance (o.k. not a difficult task I'll admit) and is a sheer delight from beginning to end!

Louis Jordan as Arcane is a pleasure to watch, a typical mad scientist in every sense of the word - he even plays a big organ late at night (if you forgive the expression!).

Swamp Thing himself is played by stuntman Dick Durock, assisted by the excellent make-up of Carl Fullerton and Neel Martz, who delivers his lines in such a low-key and deadpan manner that I'm not sure if it's just his acting talent or if he has none at all!!

'Dynesty' and former 'T J Hooker' actress Heather Locklear also does surprisingly well and shows that she can spoof it up with the rest of them.

Former enemy of **SUPERMAN**, Sarah Douglas, is also on hand as one of Arcane's assistants and she too is equally at home with this style of way-out humor.

The effects are also top-notch and along with

Swamp Thing's costume there are some wonderfully sick mutated make-ups such as a cockroach-man and a poor chap with half an elephant joined to his head!!

Over the top, wacky, amazing dialogue, funny and it even has a great ending - I for one can't wait for the next sequel!

PAUL J. BROWN.

ROBOT JOX (1989)

Entertainment in Video.

Directed by Stuart Gordon.

81 mins.

At last! Stuart Gordon's **TRANSFORMERS** inspired epic finally reaches us and turns out to be a really enjoyable tale with plenty of action.

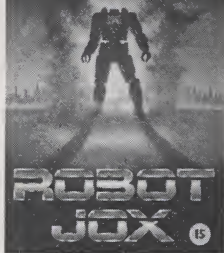
The plot goes something like this: It's fifty years since the nuclear holocaust that almost destroyed mankind, war is now abolished and all disputes have to be settled by single combat.

A huge battlefield is set up in Siberia and each alliance has a champion that pilots a massive fighting machine, they then slug it out with various forms of state-of-the-art hardware.

There are two alliances, The Market (which is made up from the USA, Europe and Japan) and The Confederation (Russia and the Third World countries), and in order to capture new territory they have to win a battle.

The pilots are contracted for ten fights each and the film's hero, Achilles, is about to go for his tenth, if he wins he can retire. His opponent is a ruthless killer called Alexander, who will stop

THE ULTIMATE KILLING MACHINE. PART MAN. PART METAL.



at nothing, especially as he is also trying for his tenth win.

The battle commences, with each pilot evenly matched, something goes wrong though and in an effort to save his fans, Achilles dives in front of a weapon and in doing so topples the giant machine into the crowd - several hundred fans are killed - the battle is declared a draw.

Achilles is so upset by the accident that he refuses to battle again for the rematch.

A replacement fighter is sought and the organisers choose Athena, a 'tubie' (a genetically engineered female fighter), for the job, problem is that Achilles is in love with her and doesn't want to see her get killed...

Originally titled **ROBOJOX**, until Orion Pictures objected to it sounding too much like **ROBOCOP**, **ROBO JOX** was a movie that nearly didn't happen at all. Charles Band's Empire Pictures ploughed a great deal of their cash into it hoping that it would save the company from going under, but unfortunately for him the movie wasn't finished in time, which was a great shame as it turned out to be an excellent science fiction/action film with outstanding model and effects work from David Allen (probably his best), who previously worked with Gordon on **DOLLS**. It has a great storyline (Gordon again) that brings to life the **TRANSFORMER** toys and cartoons. The battles are suitably realistic and very exciting. The sets are wonderfully created and include a lot of nice touches such as posters displayed everywhere encouraging women to get pregnant!

Stuart Gordon's love for the Japanese toys is obvious as this tale comes across as a painstaking and lovingly crafted crafted film, he is easily at home with science fiction as he is with straight horror, why it wasn't a massive hit in the States really puzzles me! I'm sure that it will find a following from British fans. I found it very easy to watch and like, but if this way, if you liked the 'walker' sequence from **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK** then you'll go overboard on this!

ROBO JOX is also well cast, with leading roles taken by Gary Graham (Achilles), Anne-Marie Johnson (Athena) and Paul Koslo (Alexander). It also utilises some top notch technicians too, with Gordon's story being adapted for the screen by Joe Haldean (a science fiction writer who also assisted the Air Force with weaponry development) and the concept design work by Ron (ALLEN) Cobb. Highly recommended!

PAUL J. BROWN.

SCARECROWS (1988)

Medusa.

Directed by William Wesley.

79 mins.

A slick and stylish spook-show with lashings of low-budget gore, **SCARECROWS** is good enough to make me believe that Americans can make horror films after all. Some of the celluloid debacles that have emanated from the arsehole of the Hollywood 'horror' industry in recent years (take a bow Freddy and Jason...), with their emphasis on comedy and juvenile American teenage wank fantasies have forced me into drawing the conclusion that the only good, or at least interesting genre films are now to be found in Europe.

Good though William Wesley's **SCARECROWS** is, I fear that it is merely one of a few isolated films in recent years to come out of the decay of the once bold and innovative Stateside scene with any kind of credit. Give me **SCARECROWS** any day over S P Sontow's disappointing and muddled **THE LAUGHING DEAD**, a celluloid abortion which once again proves that American 'humour' (hah!) and zombies just don't mix; at least William Wesley doesn't make that mistake, playing his zombieathon out with claustrophobic intensity and wringing some good acting out of his (unknown) cast within the confines of an economic plot.

The storyline is straightforward enough, resembling nothing more than an archetypal E.C. horror comic tale with its central theme of the wicked being punished by vengeful walking corpses, here given an added frisson by being incarnated as living scarecrows! (Vorzel Qumigdel meets Rowert). A group of paramilitary robbers in a hi-jacked Dakota freight plane are understandably affixed when one of their number bales out with all their takings, and parachute after him with less than charitable thoughts on their minds: 'Good to Bert, your Birthday's been cancelled' one of them comments over his radio link to the errant thief, who has more than his arsehole buddies to contend with... Finding an empty and dilapidated farmhouse and an old truck Bert attempts to escape the area in the ancient but serviceable vehicle - this gives rise to one of the more chilling scenes in the film; the truck breaks down and when Bert lifts the bonnet to investigate he finds that there is no engine inside... He is rather put out by this; 'What is this, some kind of fucking joke!' he exclaims.



Shortly after this he becomes the first of many victims of the murderous Fowler brothers, three men who appear to have made some kind of arcane pact with the forces of evil, living on in the form of the zombie scarecrows, a relentless, revenging trio who stalk an eerie moonlit nightscape of scarecrow cluttered fields and groves, leaping sporadically from the shadows to mutilate and disembowel the luckless intruders... An extra touch of nastiness is provided by the re-appearance of the unfortunate Bert, this time as a re-animated cadaver stuffed with blood-soaked meat, impervious to multiple bullet hits, only finally being stopped by decapitation (his head later turns up in a fridge!) By now the robbers and their hostages realises that something very weird is going on, but time is running out for them... One by one they are picked off, swelling the grisly ranks of the

living-dead; one of them returns as a lipless, grinning ghoul, wisecracking 'How are we going to live in Mexico if we are dead?' as he stabs his friend to death... The finale is an appropriately tense, gory and dumbest, and clearly paves the way for a sequel (tentatively entitled **SCARECROWS 2: THE FINAL STRAW...**). Let's hope that William Wesley doesn't keep us hanging on too long! **SCARECROWS** is a neat, unpretentious little gore-flick, and one that actually delivers the goods: the British video release is the unrated US version - uncut!! All the bloody effects are there, from finger ripping through to pitch-fork mayhem, machete hacking and sickie slashing, taking in assorted limb-toppings and gutfings along the way! Look out for the nicely gruesome scene wherein a zombie sews a freshly severed hand onto his decayed wrist stump! It's scenes like this that help to make **SCARECROWS** really work as a horror film, not as some neutered 'art' in front of the children's comedy/horror atrocity. More please...!

NIGEL BURRELL.

SCORPION THUNDERBOLT (1985)

Bronx Video Company.

Directed by Godfrey Ho.

86 mins.

Someone or something is mutilating a lot of people, leaving the local police-force totally baffled as to who is responsible.

It seems that a local witch (oh, by the way, this is an oriental film) has been busy weaving her nasty spells to satisfy her blood lust! She is using Helen, the daughter of a snake-prince and a snake-killer, to carry out the bloody crimes and when she does so she takes on the appearance of a large reptilian creature.

The only thing that can stop the spell and destroy the witch is a ring that just happens to be worn by Richard, an ass-kicking macho-man from America.

The witch finds out about this and she sends members of her cult out to kill him.

Richard seeks the advice of a fortune teller, who explains(!) the situation to him and arms him up with a special golden sword and a magic mirror. He then sets off for the witch's castle...

Lots of blood and some well choreographed fights but sadly nothing else! The silly story, acting, dialogue and atrocious dubbing sink it to irretrievable depths. The monster, which looks a lot like **GODZILLA**, really is a sorry looking thing, especially when it starts to zoom through the air on vines!

Directed very frantically with a soundtrack made up from early eighties disco music, it stars Richard Harrison, Bernard Taut, Juliet Chen and Nancy Lin.

If you want oriental adventure/horror then stick with the works of Taut Mark.

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW (1987)

CIC Video.

Directed by Wes Craven.

94 mins.

Dr Alan, an adventuring anthropologist, gets hired by a US drugs company to go to Haiti to investigate the rumours of zombiefication as a native doctor says that she has evidence of 'real life' zombies, not your normal flesh-hungry kind but poor unfortunate people that are being manipulated as an endless punishment. It must be a drug that they are using and if its properties can be found then lives could be saved with a revolutionary new kind of anaesthetic.

Dr Alan digs deep into the Haiti voodoo mysticism and culture and finds all manner of strange discoveries and places himself in severe danger with a fate worse than death itself...

A truly remarkable 'modern' zombie classic that is crafted so carefully that it literally pulls



you deep into its plot and keeps you on the edge of your seat throughout its entire 94 minutes. Director Wes Craven is on full-blown gore giving first class scares with a lot of class.

The atmosphere is so thick and appealing that when you get drawn into it, you can't get out! A horror-noir in every sense of the word, complete with lead character voice-overs.

Bill Pullman takes the leading role and is truly outstanding, he gives it all and then a little bit more (and you thought that Bruce Campbell took a lot of punishment in the EVIL DEAD movies!!) He is also supported by a great wealth of acting talent: Cathy Tyson as Marielle (the doctor with the evidence in the first place), Zakus Nkomo as the leading bad guy - very chilling, Paul Winfield, Brent Jennings and even good old Michael Tough.

Very good effects work and a tight intelligent script - best line comes from Cathy Tyson when she questions Pullman's scepticism, "They told me you could walk on water... I know why... shit floats!!"

Exotically filmed in Haiti and The Dominican Republic with some nightmare inducing photography and backed by some enchanting jungle rhythms over the soundtrack, THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW is a stunning piece of cinema that must be seen by all devotees of the genre. It was also a sheer joy to watch an eighties horror film that wasn't populated by throwaway teenage characters that you can't (or won't) care about! I really cannot praise it enough - watch out for the torture scene that leaves MARATHON MAN very behind! It does for Haiti what MIDNIGHT EXPRESS did for Turkey!

PAUL J. BROWN.

SHOCKER (1989)

Guided Home Video.
Directed by Wes Craven.
105 mins.

Jonathan Parker (Peter Berg), scholar and footballer, gets distracted in a game and has concussion when he runs into a goal-post. Later that night he has a wicked dream about the murder of his family by a TV repair-man. He wakes and gets a phone call from his cop dad, Lt. Parker (Michael Murphy), - his family have been brutally killed!

There is a psychopath on the loose and this latest batch of murders now bring the body-count to thirty.

Jonathan tells his father about his dream and how he saw it all happen but he refuses to believe him. However, when Jonathan is able to reveal aspects of the crime that only the police would know and he can give the whereabouts of the

killer's workplace he starts to listen.

The killer is in fact one Horace Plink (Mitch Pileggi), who is prepared for the visit of the police officers - he slaughters a whole bunch of them before making a run for it. The remaining policemen discover black-magic items and mummified cats in the TV workshop.

When news gets out about Johnathon's remarkable dream the media splash his face all over the town, Plink is also very interested and is more than a little pissed-off!

Meanwhile, another family is found dead.

Johnathon leaves his house for a football practice - Plink slips in as he goes out and slaughters his girl - Alison (Casi Cooper), smearing her blood all over the walls.

The extremely distraught Johnathon has another dream, and he sees Plink's next victim. He goes to the scene of the crime (his dad and co. follow) and after a tough battle Plink gets arrested.

Naturally, Plink is sentenced to the electric chair. But before he is due to be executed the guards find him performing some sort of mystical ritual in front of a TV set.

Johnathon asks if he can attend the Juicing of Plink and takes a ringside seat.

Plink is duly strapped into the chair and he is fired to a crisp - only trouble is, he ain't dead, he's worse than ever!! More deaths follow with the supernatural Plink taking over the bodies of people who get in his way. He has only one thing on his mind - kill Jonathan Parker!

Plink has also devised a rather neat method of travel - he moves around on the TV screens, travelling as static, and popping up in peoples homes for a bit of mass murder here and there! But there is a glimmer of hope for young Johnathon - Alison pays him a blood-soaked visit and leaves him a love- pendant that can help rid the killer from the poor unwilling hosts. Unfortunately for Johnathon he loses the pendant in a lake.

The body count continues...

A desperate attempt by Wes Craven to get himself re-hitched to the ' Freddy' bandwagon once more. The trouble is that Plink is too much like Krueger, not physically, but in every other department. We have dreams, we have one-liners, we have endless slaughter in a variety of ways, we have a distinctive 'uniform', etc, etc. You can't really say that one of them outweighs the other as they are so similar. I find it remarkable that Craven imagines that his audience is this dumb!!

Some of the SFX are very well achieved and are worthy of a mention, such as the integration of Johnathon and Plink with newsreel footage and the eerie way that the ghostly Alison glides

through the lake as if on wheels. But, as we already know, SFX do not make a film and the whole credibility is stretched (along with some poor guy's lip!) to breaking point towards the end.

The concept of Plink worked most effectively when he was portrayed as a pure-crazed-serial-killer as he was truly terrifying and was the stuff of real nightmares.

Back to the drawing board Wes - can this really be the same man who gave us THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW?

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE SLEEPING CAR (1989)

Castle Pictures.
Directed by Douglas Curtis.
84 mins.

Jason McKee (David Naughton), a mature Journalism student, rents half a train carriage from an old dear. She tells him that her dead husband, 'The Mister', loved the carriage. Jason looks around and gets a shock when he pulls back a dust-sheet and sees 'The Mister' looking back up at him, he looks again and he is gone!

However, not to be deterred he settles in and goes to college for his first day back at school, having decided to stay again after escaping from his failed marriage.

Later he makes himself comfortable in his strange new home, plays his hi-fi loud but gets a weird message passed under his adjoining door by his neighbour, Mr Tuttle (Kevin McCarthy).

Jason feels a little out of place at school being in a completely different age group, but with the help of Kim (Judea Aronson), with whom he starts up a relationship, and Bud (Jeff Conway), the street-wise tutor, he soon starts to feel at ease.

Kim's former boyfriend, Dwight, gets a little upset at her going out with another guy and when Jason is out he goes round to the carriage and trashes the insides but is halted when a face manifests itself in the ceiling and the chair-springs start to coil themselves through his body and then gets dumped into the nearby stream!

When Jason discovers his wrecked home he questions his cranky neighbour who says that the carriage is haunted and he offers him some help with his 'white magic' to try and overcome the evil force inside. Jason declines the strange offer but as deaths occur it seems as though Tuttle is right and he must do something to stop 'The Mister' before it's too late...

No joits and only average effects, it's only the wit of David Naughton and Jeff Conway that save



this movie from slipping into obscurity. Naughton proves to be just as likeable as he was in *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON* (some of the latter's dream sequences are copied to a tee!) and delivers his lines expertly. Kevin McCarthy also adds a little something and seems to be enjoying himself as the paranoid Tuffie.

Fairly disappointing really as the director's earlier work, *THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT* and *BLACK MOON RISING*, showed more promise than this. It has one or two reasonable set pieces, the best of which involves a gore spurting bed, but nothing that really sticks in the mind. The effects are the work of John Baughler, who also plays the part of 'The Master', and are something of a let-down from his past efforts. The full appearance of the ghost, although quite effective at first, is, after closer scrutiny, plainly a cheap stuck-on-jaw-piece (a la Kenny Everett) that moves very astoundingly and is obviously a case of 'you can't do everything at once'! Not exactly sleep inducing but as my school reports used to say, "could do better".

PAUL J. BROWN.

SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE II (1987)

Concorde Pictures

Directed by Deborah Brock and Don Daniel.

90 mins.

The original *SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE* sported the ad line, 'close your eyes for a second and you sleep forever' - I nearly did, not by death but through total boredom, which is why Crystal Bernard, who portrays Courtney, can be easily excused, for she appears to be sleeping as the sequel's opening credits start rolling.

This time round, Courtney (played by a different actress) who, in the original, helped her elder sister - now recovering in a mental home - to slay the drill-wielding psycho, Russ Thorne, is now having recurring nightmare flashbacks of the whole ordeal that took place four years ago.

Seeing that Courtney is now in an all-female rock band, one of her partners suggests that a change will do her good so the girls, and their boyfriends, rent out a villa in the country for rehearsals and partying.

But the nightmares keep coming and through those nightmares Courtney dreams up a new drill-wielding psycho - a rocker with a drill attached to the end of his guitar.

Of course, everyone disbelieves her, thinking that she has finally flipped her lid until our new psycho emerges from Courtney's imagination and enters reality, using his drill to tear through flesh and bone.

Despite the original being totally crap (don't get me wrong, the sequel is mega-crap) at least it wasn't confusing. With *SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE II* I cannot find the connection between the two films? Has Russ Thorne really come back to life in the guise of a psycho-rockabilly? Do we really care?

The visions which Courtney has are bearable but tend to rely far too heavily on the *ELM STREET* type dream sequences, i.e. a frozen chicken coming back to life and attacking Courtney; even the old worn 'blood pouring out of the bath tap' effect is used here to no avail. And the psycho using pathetic Freddy-type one-liners doesn't help matters either.

James Gurnis's gore effects are well done and quite original - gruesome flashbacks from the first film, drills through flesh, a severed arm, and an excellent scene where a girl's face grows into an enormous zit finally exploding in a shower of pus. But for the quality of this piece of trash, not even those will suffice. Again, like its predecessor, *SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE II* is written, produced and (partly)directed by a woman which may indicate why the male deaths occur onscreen and the female ones don't.

All in all, *SLUMBER PARTY MASSACRE II* is just another tiresome entry in the stalk 'n slash series. Avoid at all costs.

MARK CRITTENDEN.



SOCIETY (1989)

Modus.

Directed by Brian Yuzna.

95 mins.

Well, what can I tell you that don't you already know? *SOCIETY* is a perfect example of modern psychological horror and is one of the best films to have emerged from the US of A in a long time. The plot, put simply, revolves around Bill Whitely (played by Billy Verlock, who can be currently seen on our TV screens in the abysmal 'Boywatch'!) and his paranoia that something weird is going on and that he doesn't seem to fit in with all who surround him.

He relates all his fears and thoughts to a shrink on regular visits, but it still doesn't stop him from seeing strange things (an example being his

sister's boobs being stuck on her back!!).

Then one day he hears a tape recording of his sister's 'coming out party', where it seems that she was the star attraction in more ways than one - she was the centre-piece of a huge sex-orgy with everyone having their evil way with her, including him and dad!!

At first he refuses to believe his friend's tale and when he eventually comes to terms with it he informs his psychiatrist who borrows the tape overnight. But, the next day when they replay the tape it all sounds perfectly innocent with none of the raunchy talk and goings on present! He calls his friend and asks him to bring another copy of the tape, but before he gets there he meets with a fatal road accident.

Billy then questions his sister and his parents but it seems that they are hiding something from him and that he is drifting into either madness

or just further and further away from those around him. They call him paranoid - but to Billy his fears are very real.

It's like his psychiatrist says, "Some people make the rules and others have to follow them... and if you don't follow the rules, very bad things are going to happen". What is it that makes the rich and affluent so different and why is he the odd one out?

It's time for Billy to find out and a party is being thrown in his honour where it is hoped that he will, at last, become one with society...

When first screened at the 1989 'Shock Around The Clock' Alan Jones introduced it as a cross between *THE THING* and something like *DOBBIE DOES DALLAS*, he wasn't far wrong I can tell you! I won't bore you with a long list of superlatives but needless to say *SOCIETY* is daring, different and devilishly entertaining. Its sickness and amazing effects should leave a lasting impression.

It really is a wholly original allegorical tale that is perfect for Thatcher's Britain (the rich sucking the poor dry) and is a MUST SEE for everyone, especially as the BBC let it through totally uncensored!

Silfingher, alloy and slippery fun for 'ahunters' everywhere!!

PAUL J. BROWN.

SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION (1989)

Braveworld.

Directed by Tobe Hooper.
93 mins.

The film opens with a bang as it centres around a Hydrogen Bomb Test Site in The Nevada Desert in 1955. A young couple, Brian and Peggy, are used as experimental guinea pigs testing various 'anti-radiation' drugs in an experiment known as 'Project Samsen'. They are shut away in a filthy nuke-shelter and get exposed to a blast a mere 200 yards away.

Unknown to the scientists Peggy gets pregnant. A baby boy, known as David, is born (on the tenth anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb) and apart from a red round birthmark on his hand everything is fine and normal. Well almost, the baby remains fine but Brian and Peggy get more than a little hot under the collar and spontaneously combust before our very eyes! "Now lets get hot and get some answers" says one of the military bosses!

The scientists believe that the vaccines given combined with the intense radiation reduced the couples odds of spontaneous human combustion (now known as SHC) to just one-to-one!

The story then leaps forward to the present and

David is celebrating his 34th birthday, he has grown up normally but does tend to suffer from lots of violent headaches and always runs at a high temperature. As the day progresses he starts to feel strange.

An acquaintance bursts into flames after an argument with him - the police put it down to smoking in bed!

He later discovers a flame leaping from his own finger after another angry encounter with his ex-wife. He visits his puzzled doctor who also bursts into flames (while taking a shower!).

David's girlfriend, Lisa, phones a radio psychic after hearing him talk about SHC. David speaks to him and the psychic manages to give David some background information on his parents (David was never told the truth). The phone link is severed when the station runs out of air time, causing yet more infernos from David.

The birthmark suddenly doubles in size and flames torch from a strange hole that has appeared in his chest. It seems that the authorities had bargained for this to happen and have been waiting for all this time, but what will happen to David...?

Well, what can I say, unfortunately Tobe Hooper has failed to deliver the goods yet again although he does try hard. It is fairly original (as we must forget the awful *FIRESTARTER*) but he could have exploited the subject matter to a much greater extent. The film works best when the flames are kept to a controlled minimum as they tend to get way out of hand (literally!) when shown to engulf everywhere, losing a lot of their paranormal feel (and credibility!).

Bred (ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST & CHILD'S PLAY) Douff plays poor David, the guy with the burning ambition (groan) and acts the part as if he has been studying reels of Seth Brundle footage from *THE FLY* - In some shots he looks a lot like him!

Some of the photography is very atmospheric especially a scene where David is shown limping his way along with smoke lifting slowly from his tormented body; and the splendid pyrotechnic effects are obviously put to good use and I would think that most of the budget went in this department.

In summing up, not a classic but, because it's different, it's still a worthy entry into our beloved genre. Celebrity apothers should look out for AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON director, John Landis, in a 'hot' cameo role! Pyromaniacs will be queuing up for this one - get it while it's hot!

PAUL J. BROWN

TALES FROM THE CRYPT (1989)

CIC.

79 mins.

Three Tales of terror from the big budget US TV series that features the work of top notch directors. Each story comes straight from the pages of William M. Gaines original EC comics.

'THE MAN WHO WAS DEATH' - directed by Walter Hill.

This story opens with an electrocution and is narrated by the man who switches on the juke, the state executioner, Miles Talbot.

Talbot really loves his work and goes about it with a real sense of pride. But one day the state decides to abolish the death penalty and poor old Talbot finds himself unemployed.

Talbot doesn't stay out of work for long though and very soon he's dealing out the volts and jolts once more...

'AND ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE' - directed by Robert Zemeckis.

A wife gives her husband a Christmas present he'll never forget - a poker implanted in his head! As she tries to dispose of the body a radio announcer warns women to be on their guard as a killer has escaped and is stalking around in a Santa suit wielding an axe.

The woman is attacked by the psychotic Santa but she manages to get away.

Should she phone the police and risk giving her own crime away?

'DID THAT CAT... HE'S REAL GONE' - directed by Richard Donner.

Ulric The Undying, a circus sideshow performer, gets buried alive as part of his act and while he's in the coffin he tells us his strange story. He was a tramp and got offered vast wealth by a mad doctor if he agreed to have part of a cats brain transplanted into his own cranium in order to see if he can give a man nine lives!

The operation was a success and Ulric is now making loads-a-money, how long can it go on?

These American horror shows are getting better and better (the *ELM STREET* series excepted), very high production values, good stories and effective dialogue (just how many 'fucks' are they allowed to say on US TV though?). Well cast and at times gruesome - I loved a scene in the second story when the wife calmly gift-wraps her husbands head in a plastic bag and then ties a ribbon around his dead neck!

Each segment is linked by a pretty nifty animatronic zombie that cracks the kind of puns that Forry Ackerman would be proud of!

The only thing that really mars this baby is the piss-poor sleeve artwork, otherwise it's a winner!

PAUL J. BROWN.

THE TINGLER (1959)

William Castle Productions.
Directed by William Castle.
82 mins.

It's a well-documented medical fact, of course, that extreme fear causes a hideous, rubbery creature to materialise along the length of one's spine and remain there, digging its talons into the bone, until a hearty scream paralyses the beast into releasing its grip. At least, that is, according to the text-book of Dr. William Castle M.D. (Mad Director). Add to all this a plot featuring Vincent Price as an obsessed surgeon injecting himself with L.S.D., Judith Evelyn playing a deaf mute running a silent movie theatre with her hubby (Philip Coolidge) who is plotting to frighten her to death, blitzy



Patricia Cutts as Price's two-timing flirt of a wife, and a couple of unconvincing 'teenagers' for the 1950's audience to identify with, and **THE TINGLER** emerges as a hokey treat packed with cod-sci-fi and wild, wild sequences. Price's acid trip, reputedly the first one depicted on film, as Vincent stumbles around his lab yelling 'The Walls! The Walls! The Walls!' while Castle's camera concentrates on an out-of-focus skeleton dangling in the corner; Evelyn's death scene is even better, as a masked, knife-wielding psycho lures her into the bathroom and a gore-soaked hand rises from the tub which is brimming with red blood (a terrific colour effect in an otherwise black-and-white movie). As for the episode where the Tinger breaks free in the movie house during a screening of **TOLABLE DAVID**, all I can say is 'Scream For Your Lives!!' Definitely the weirdest of Castle's incredible gimmick laden crowd-pleasers, **THE TINGLER** was given a welcome airing by Channel 4 early in 1990. Unfortunately, this was without the benefit of the electrically-charged seats on which 1959's first-run patrons would have planted their backsides - perhaps next time it's shown you could duplicate the effect by having a close relative run needles up your arse at strategic moments, but the movie is so enjoyable that no additional stimulus seems necessary. Unless you have to have some L.S.D. lying around...
CARRELL BUXTON.

TWISTED NERVE (1968)

Warner Home Video.
Directed by Roy Boulting.
113 mins.

Hywel Bennett stars in this sixties psych-out thriller as Martin Durnley, a man in his twenties, who lives at home with mum and his step-father. The trouble is that Martin has an older brother, who was born a mongol and from fear of having her second child born the same the mother molly-coddled Martin so much that he sometimes thinks of himself as George, a six year old!

He is unable to hold down a job and has continuous arguments with his step-father. Whilst out at the shops 'George' steals a toy duck and the blame gets put upon a young girl, Susan (Hayley Mills), with the store detectives thinking that they are accomplices. As a result of the mix-up 'George' gets to hear the girl's address.

He later follows her to her place of work and gives her a present. Susan is taken in by his little boy lost appearance, she thinks that he is perfectly harmless just a little slow, but David has other plans.

The step-father gets David a job on a sheep farm in Australia in a desperate attempt at making a man of him and buys him an air ticket and gives him £50 in cash.

David pretends to go and puts his twisted plan into action. He makes his way (as George) over to Susan's home, a big boarding house run by her mother, and manages to worm his way inside to stay for a few days, making everyone feel very sorry for him.

Now that his family believe him to be out of the country, he tools himself up with a pair of dressmakers scissors and goes out into the night air looking for his step-father.

With that little job out of the way he can now move in on Susan...

Sometimes a little slow, but always interesting to look at with the boyish Hywel Bennett going OTT as the split-personality psychopath and little Hayley Mills in fine form as the girl next door type.

TWISTED NERVE caused quite a stir at the time of its original release and still stands up quite well today, it does get a little dodgy though when the subject of songbirds rears its head, with the producers trying to cover their butts with a silly disclaimer at the beginning of the film.

A good supporting cast with familiar names like Billie Whitelaw, Frank Finlay, Timothy West and Barry Foster, but without a doubt its best supporting player is the music composed by Bernard (PSYCHO) Herrmann.

Available at £9.99 and well worth it or you may want to wait for its next TV showing, whichever you choose, if you haven't seen it you'll enjoy it!

PAUL J. BROWN.

WORLD GONE WILD (1987)

Warner Home Video.
Directed by Lee H. Katzin.
91 mins.

Yet another venture down the well-worn road of 'after the bomb' survival sagas, looking a little like a cross between **MAJ. MAJ.** and **A BOY AND HIS DOG**.

The year is 2087 and it's seventy-five years after the final war, most people died and it hasn't rained for fifty years, so you guessed it, water is the precious commodity and as the narrated voice puts it at the beginning 'It's really fucked up!'

While most survivors battle and scavenge in the city, a community of smart people languish in the desert town of Lost Wells, just fifty miles away and as its name suggests water is plentiful.

Lost Wells is made up from stacks of wrecked cars which act as homes for the inhabitants. The leader of these people is a hippy throwback called Ethan who is a mystical man and he may even possess some special powers. They live a peaceful life and protect themselves from any outside threat, which usually comes from the cannibal people that occupy the rest of the desert.

However, their peaceful existence is halted one day with the arrival of Derek and his 'whiter than white' suited army of fanatical followers who march in and massacre many of the group...

It appears that the loopy Derek is brainwashing his army with 'The Wit & Wisdom of Charles Manson' and much to the dismay of everyone they are not the least bit interested in the plentiful water supply!

Ethan must do something to stop Derek's second intended 'visit' and ventures forth into the city to try and rustle up a team of highly skilled mercenaries to aid Lost Wells in its hour of need. In return he offers as much water as they can ever need.

Ethan is successful in his search and manages to assemble a tough bunch of men and they return to Lost Wells and prepare for the second coming of Derek...

What starts off as a standard procedure in this category of film making gradually erodes into a likeable picture that is permeated throughout with heavy doses of black humour and the odd teasing of ultra-violence that is almost guaranteed to get **WORLD GONE WILD** an underground following.

Directed in an offbeat fashion with some excellent comic-book style acting from its leading players, most notably Bruce Dern as the odd teasing of ultra-violence that is almost guaranteed to get **WORLD GONE WILD** an underground following. Directed in an offbeat fashion with some excellent comic-book style acting from its leading players, most notably Bruce Dern as the odd teasing of ultra-violence that is almost guaranteed to get **WORLD GONE WILD** an underground following. Directed in an offbeat fashion with some excellent comic-book style acting from its leading players, most notably Bruce Dern as the odd teasing of ultra-violence that is almost guaranteed to get **WORLD GONE WILD** an underground following.

At times amusing and at others very violent, and although it's not completely original (i.e. **THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN**, **BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS** etc) it is still a film to watch out for.

PAUL J. BROWN.

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